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Electra

with Introduction, Translation and Commentary

by

Martin Cropp

SECOND EDITION

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GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Euripides' remarkable variety of subject, ideas and methods challenges each generation of readers — and audiences — to fresh appraisal and closer definition. This Series of his plays is in the general style of Aris and Phillips' Classical Texts: it offers university students and, we hope, sixth-formers, as well as teachers of Classics and Classical Civilisation at all levels, new editions which will emphasise analytical and literary appreciation. In each volume there is an editor's Introduction which sets the play in its original context, discusses its dramatic and poetic resources, and assesses its meaning. The Greek text is faced on the opposite page by a new English prose translation which attempts to be both accurate and idiomatic. The Commentary, keyed wherever possible to the translation rather than the Greek, pursues the aims of the Introduction in analysing structure and development, annotating and appreciating poetic style, and explaining the ideas; since the translation itself reveals the editor's detailed understanding of the Greek, philological comment is confined to special phenomena or problems which affect interpretation. These are the guidelines within which individual contributors to the Series have been asked to work, but they are free to handle or emphasise whatever they judge important in their particular play, and to choose their own manner of doing so. It is natural that commentaries and commentators on Euripides should reflect his variety as a poet.

Eighteen volumes have now been published in the Series, including two of *Selected Fragmentary Plays*. The last two will be *Cyclops and Major Fragments of Greek Satyric Drama* (Patrick O'Sullivan with Christopher Collard) and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Christopher Collard with James Morwood). It is still hoped to publish the almost certainly spurious *Rhesus*, but outside the Euripidean series.

Christopher Collard, Oxford
September 2012

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of this book was published in 1988. The present edition is extensively revised, corrected and I hope improved in the light of the prolific scholarship of the intervening years. Amongst other things I have prepared my own text (with much help from the work of James Diggle, Giuseppina Basta Donzelli and David Kovacs) and given rather more attention to matters of text and language in the Commentary; the more technical points are now marked off there in square brackets. As before my main objective has been to aid the understanding of *Electra* as drama and as poetry within its historical context.

I owe thanks to the many scholars from whose work I have benefited, either through their publications (including reviewers of the first edition) or through personal communication. Ester Cerbo kindly sent me an advance text of her discussion of the third stasimon (listed below on p. 248). I have not seen Evert van Emde Boas's *Linguistic Studies in Euripides' Electra*, to be published by the Oxford University Press.

As before, my greatest debts are to Christopher Collard, who has now seen the Aris & Phillips Euripides series almost to completion, and to my wife Elizabeth and son Robert, to whom the book was and is dedicated.

Martin Cropp
September 2012

INTRODUCTION

A VIEW OF THE PLAY

Electra is a mature work, composed when Euripides was over sixty years old and had more than thirty years' experience of producing at the Athenian festivals. It carries the hallmarks that distinguished Euripidean tragedy for his contemporaries:[1] clarity of exposition, avoidance of solemnity, insistence on what is plausible at the level of everyday experience, a broad social and moral range in characters and motivations, variety and elaboration of thoughts and arguments, and a shift of focus away from the chorus. There are links with his earlier plays in the treatment of female suffering and resentful anger (*thymos*) as motives for tragic action.[2] But the dramatic mode is changing: in plot, characters, mood and style the concentration and consistency of the earlier plays are being superseded. Euripidean 'realism' is deployed with a flexibility that absorbs the audience in a variety of passing moods and uses contrast to heighten the final tragic effect. Some features of *Electra* anticipate the final stages of his development — the rhetorical elaborations of *Phoenician Women* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the adventurous complications of *Helen*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Orestes*. Like this last group *Electra* owes much to the *Odyssey* in complexity and variety, humour and incongruity, sentimentality and domesticity, as if Euripides was leavening tragedy's Iliadic severity with the *Odyssey*'s humane range and moral subtlety.[3]

Matricide is the tragic focus of the play. Two-thirds of the way through, Orestes has triumphed over Aegisthus and reclaimed his birthright. Now Clytemnestra, diverted by the Old Man (a loyal servant of Agamemnon's family), is to be lured by Electra into the cottage where her son waits to dispatch her. But first Electra delivers a speech over Aegisthus's corpse, in reprisal (she says) for the wrongs he has done her in his

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[1] See especially Aristophanes, *Frogs* 907–1098.

[2] See below, p. 11.

[3] On Euripides' innovations in tragic form, generic diversification and authorial openness see especially Michelini 1987.52–116, Mastronarde 2010.44–87, and with reference to *Electra* Goldhill 1986.244–64, Michelini 1987.181–230, Burnett 1998.225–46, Goff 1999–2000.

life. Her complaints have been aired earlier, but this is a summary, an intensely personal speech dominated by sexual insults (see 907–56 n.). Electra portrays the fallen tyrant and usurper as a cuckolded seducer, a woman's underling, a sexual molester, an effeminate. Insulting a dead man is morally questionable in itself (902 n.), and this display of spite shows the obsessive nature of Electra's hatred. The exhibition of Aegisthus's corpse makes it doubly clear that he and his power are finished. Electra is liberated, Orestes is restored — and without Aegisthus Clytemnestra is no threat and has no defence.

At this point a contrast between tyrannicide and matricide begins to come into focus. Electra dismisses Aegisthus, and the Chorus agrees that his fate is a triumph of justice over wickedness. Then attention is wrested away towards the murder of Clytemnestra as she is seen approaching the cottage. For the first time the problem of matricide is raised (967ff.): 'What then shall we do', Orestes asks, 'shall we really slay our mother?' Faced with the sight of her he loses confidence in Apollo's instruction to 'kill her, who nurtured me and bore me'. Her presence reminds him of the natural link between himself and his mother, 'whom I should not kill'. Electra however presses their father's claim to vengeance as validated by Apollo's oracle, and Orestes finally, reluctantly, obeys: 'If the gods think it right, so be it . . .'. Clytemnestra's fate is sealed, and the tragic act of matricide is assured.

But before the act takes place, Clytemnestra too faces Electra. Their debate about her guilt (1011ff.) has a direct parallel in Sophocles' *Electra*, but it differs crucially in its setting. Euripides' play confronts Electra with each of her oppressors when Aegisthus is already dead, and hinges these confrontations on the argument with her brother about the rightness of the matricide, emphasizing Clytemnestra's helplessness and the ruthlessness which Electra, unlike Orestes, carries forward from the first victim to the second. Her hatreds for the two are inextricably linked. To Clytemnestra she shows the same hostility, the same sense of personal grievance, the same insistence on corrupt sexual motivation. Even Clytemnestra will not suggest that the accusations are unfounded, however coloured and biased they may be. Yet her attempt at a defence draws attention to the blindness of Electra's hatred — blindness to the possibility of making a mistake and living to regret it (like Clytemnestra herself, 1105ff.), and to the natural tie between mother and child. Electra the virgin wife has used an imaginary childbirth and Clytemnestra's maternal feelings to lure her to her death (652–8 n.). The unnaturalness of what she is now doing is stressed not only by her mother's behaviour but by what she says about Electra's

nature: 'My child, affection for your father is in your nature' (πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν ἀεί, 1102); 'you too are self-willed, you know' (καὶ σὺ δ' αὐθάδης ἔφυς, 1117).

Clytemnestra's entry into the cottage and the choral song that follows are packed with reminiscences of her own crime and allusions to retribution. 'Justice for my father' is Electra's last word to her; 'do not kill your mother' is Clytemnestra's last word to her children. The Chorus pursues the theme of justice even after the murder, balancing motherhood against retribution, but in the end they confirm that Electra in an 'unholy' state of mind has driven her brother to a 'dreadful' act . They relive the moment with Orestes: 'You went through anguish, hearing the wailing cry of the mother who gave you birth . . . how could you bear to set your eyes upon your mother as she bled and breathed her last?' (1210ff.). Orestes sings not of justice but of 'bloody, defiling deeds . . . in reprisal for my pains' (1179ff.), of the world's abhorrence for a matricide, of the sight of his mother's breast. Electra laments the hatred that turned her against her mother, the blighting of her future as a wife, and her corrupting influence on her brother.

Castor sums up: 'Her punishment is just, but not your deed . . . Wise though he [the god Apollo] is, he did not instruct you wisely' (1244f.). Orestes will survive exile from Argos, persecution by the Erinyes and trial at Athens to prosper in Arcadia. Athena will protect him, and Apollo 'will take the blame upon himself, since he decreed your mother's murder' (1266f.). Electra will settle in Phocis as Pylades' wife, and her peasant husband will be rewarded with prosperity there (1249, 1284ff.). All has happened in accordance with the will of Zeus and the decrees of Destiny (*Moira*) which can only be accepted (1247f., 1290f., 1301f.). Orestes and Electra are thus relieved of pollution (see 1294 n.) and assured that their actions have fitted a larger pattern, but none of this can relieve them of the impact of what they have done; nor can Castor's assurances about 'inherited doom', his pity for 'poor mortals with their many sufferings' (1306ff., 1329ff.), or the compensations of happiness in the future. 'Our mother's murderous curses are parting us from our ancestral home', cries Electra (1323f.), and the play ends in grief, exile and the dispersal of the family.

Clytemnestra has rightly died, but her children have killed her wrongly. Tyrannicide should not have led to matricide. These crucial distinctions are fatally blurred if we see the murders as crimes motivated only by Orestes' and Electra's personal humiliations and resentments. On that

view the play lacks the complex emotional impact which is characteristic of tragedy. Yet the distinctions are there. Aegisthus is portrayed as a fully deserving victim, a usurper who fears retribution for killing Agamemnon and has tried to eliminate his heirs; he has seduced the king's wife, mistreated Electra, and abused the corpse, tomb, property and household of Agamemnon.[4] His murder is welcomed as a triumph of right over wrong, not only by Electra but by the Old Man, the Messenger, and the Chorus.[5] Their views are not disproved by the tyrant's genial display of hospitality towards the disguised Orestes (see 747–858 n.). The ugliness of the murder matches the ugliness of the political and dynastic feud in which Orestes is embroiled, but it does not rehabilitate Aegisthus or compromise the justice of the tyrannicide.

Clytemnestra shares Aegisthus's guilt, and her punishment is equally just and welcome in the eyes of the Chorus, and of the Old Man.[6] But Euripides makes her a more ambivalent and vulnerable figure than the Aeschylean man-woman who glories in the success of the plot against her husband which she herself has devised and executed.[7] Aeschylus's Clytemnestra comes to recognize the enormity of what she has done, but she never apologizes for it as Euripides' Clytemnestra does.[8] Her arrogant confidence in the Atreid house's wealth is ironically recalled in Euripides' play when the Chorus and Electra congratulate her on her 'blessedness' and she in turn justifies owning Trojan slaves as 'compensation' for the loss of Iphigenia.[9] This Clytemnestra lives in fear of public opinion,

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[4] Guilt and fear of retribution 14–33, 614–7, 830–5; abuse of Agamemnon's family 46, 59, 166, 266, 289, 318–31, 942.

[5] Electra 583f., 675, 771, 952–6; Old Man 676; Messenger 761–4, 877f.; Chorus 590–2, 876–9, 957–8.

[6] See especially 485f., 1155, 1169 (Chorus) and 663 (Old Man). For denials of the rehabilitation of Clytemnestra often detected in this play see e.g. Steidle 1968.66, Aélion 1983.2.303–11. On her self-defence in the *agôn* see Commentary, 998–1123 n.

[7] A. *Ag.* 1372ff. Euripides portrays Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as more or less equal partners in the planning and execution of Agamemnon's murder, although the details remain imprecise (see Commentary, 8–10 n., 160–1 n., 164–5 n.), just as Clytemnestra's motives remain purposefully unclear (cf. 1161–2 n.). In the *agôn* she claims that she acted to avenge Iphigenia, while Electra blames her lust for Aegisthus. Neither is a reliable witness.

[8] A. *Ag.* 1475ff., 1567ff., 1654ff.; E. *El.* 1105ff.

[9] A. *Ag.* 958ff.; E. *El.* 994ff.

and of punishment by Orestes, not because of a dream-warning (as in Stesichorus, Aeschylus and Sophocles) but because she knows she must fear his anger (1114f.). Electra's assertion that she would gladly learn of her son's death may be exaggerated but it is not unfounded (418–9 n.). She has saved Electra's life, but only out of self-interest according to the Peasant (27ff.). Her argument justifying her crime is evasive (1011–50 n.) and, as Electra retorts, it does nothing to justify betraying and abandoning her own children.

By portraying a Clytemnestra with some human feelings Euripides not only provided a context for Electra's marriage to the Peasant and the plot that brings her to her daughter's cottage and her death, but transformed her into a pathetic figure, a foil for Electra's ruthless hatred. The Chorus's sympathy during and after her murder is sympathy for a victim, for a mother 'suffering grievous miseries and more at your own children's hands' (1187f.). The children's revulsion and Orestes' doubts on seeing his mother show natural instinct rebelling against the demands of justice and revenge. The matricide becomes a tragic *pathos*, a just yet horrifying punishment.

It also becomes a *pathos* for those who enact it. After the killing Orestes, Electra and the Chorus together lament what has been done: 'So you bore children to be your murderers!', Orestes cries (1229); 'You went through anguish', the Chorus sings, 'hearing the wailing cry of the mother who gave you birth' (1210ff.). The Chorus blames Electra, and Electra blames herself, for driving Orestes to commit what they all now see as an unnatural and unholy act.[10] Before the crisis Orestes has linked the killing of his mother with the killing of Aegisthus: both must die as Agamemnon's killers. It is difficult to maintain that he approaches his task reluctantly or tries to avoid thinking about it. Rather, he takes the matricide for granted, fails to understand its implications up to the point when he must act, and visualizes it only abstractly in contrast with Electra's all too vivid lust for her mother's death. The revelation of the true nature of the matricide, unrecognized by both Chorus and characters up to the moment of crisis, is crucial to the play's tragic impact.

In the leisurely early scenes Electra and her peasant husband are introduced in their rustic setting, Orestes and Pylades enter Argive territory warily, and Electra's miseries and resentments are displayed in her monody and exchanges with the arriving Chorus. Then comes the encounter between Electra and Orestes, who guards his anonymity while

[10] 1201–5 (Chorus); 1182–4, 1224f. (Electra).

sounding her out and hearing of her sorrows. Next he meets the Peasant and (still concealing his identity) accepts his hospitality in a fulsome speech. Electra sends her husband off for supplies to the Old Man, who we have learned is the only loyal friend who can recognize Orestes face to face. A choral ode bridges the time-gap, and after some further diversions Orestes is revealed and the drama moves to urgent action.

The portrayal of Orestes and Electra in these early scenes has become something of a test case in the discussion of characterization in Greek tragedy. Orestes is variously seen as weak and indecisive,[11] as having positive moral faults,[12] as 'plausible and sympathetic',[13] or as having no particular character at all. This last assessment rests on the view that the Greek tragedians were not primarily interested in linking tragic actions with complex personality traits, and that many of the details that are sometimes pressed for characterization actually serve other dramatic purposes — shaping the dramatic action, evoking the emotion of the moment, pointing arguments and morals, creating rhetorical impact.[14] This view need not be pushed to an extreme, but the search for 'character' does demand careful examination of language and dramatic technique as well as Greek cultural and behavioral norms.

In Euripides' portrayal[15] Orestes arrives on Apollo's instructions to avenge Agamemnon and restore his own position by killing both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. His first words declare his intention to do exactly this (85–9), and he repeats it several times,[16] though without contemplating what killing his mother will really mean. He approaches the task reasonably enough with caution, for he is a fugitive without resources and the Old Man's briefing confirms how difficult and dangerous the task will

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[11] Wilamowitz 1883.228f. described him as 'determined and energetic against Aegisthus, irresolute and reluctant where the matricide is concerned.'

[12] For Denniston xxvi–xxvii he is timid, unresourceful, petulant, cynical and callous. Cf. O'Brien 1964, Arnott 1981.182f.

[13] Lloyd 1986.19 (describing both Orestes and Electra).

[14] T. Wilamowitz's book on Sophocles (1917) was an influential statement. On pp. 238–43 he argues that the Euripidean Orestes' revulsion from the matricide is sudden, unprepared, and not in need of explanation beyond the generalities of human nature.

[15] On the characterization of Orestes see especially Steidle 1968.69–81, Lloyd 1986.10–16, Mastronarde 2010.287f. See also below, pp. 28–31, on his character in other plays of Euripides.

[16] 276–82, 599f., 612–4, 646; cf. 677–82.

be.[17] The picture is however complicated by his self-concealment even after he is sure of Electra's resolve and of the Peasant's and the Chorus's loyalty. This prolonged concealment is in part a reflection of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus reveals himself to his son only when they are alone, withholds his identity from his wife even after he is assured of her loyalty, and later does the same to his aged father, almost breaking his heart. Euripides uses Orestes' disguise similarly to create dramatic suspense and surprise, while also reworking motifs from the equivalent scenes of Aeschylus and Sophocles.[18] The delay also fits his own design, for the play's early scenes are not so much about Orestes as about Electra. The portrayal of her grief and isolation requires a postponement of the recognition comparable with (though different in scale and method from) the postponement in Sophocles' play. Meanwhile the prolonged disguise limits the characterization of Orestes (again, the Sophoclean Orestes is comparable). Throughout these scenes he speaks not as himself but as Orestes' envoy. At times we see the real Orestes' emotions in conflict with the courtesy and reserve of his assumed persona.[19] The moralizing speeches about pity, sensibility, and the criteria of nobility sound snobbish and superficial, but they come from the disguised persona, and the first of them, at least, seems designed to divert attention from Orestes' identity. What Orestes says in these speeches is applicable to his own conduct, and will be recalled when the matricide is revealed at the end as a pitiless and ignoble act; in this sense it is ironically related to the moral framework of the play. But it is hard to see it as revealing Orestes himself as a hypocrite or undercutting sympathy for him at the outset.

Until the crisis Orestes remains, in fact, something of a cipher, a young man open to direction like Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, accepting his mission because he is unperceptive and inexperienced, going through with it only because of Apollo's command and Electra's obsession. He need not be seen as irresolute or supplied with alternative motives for

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[17] 84f., 130f., 203–5, 233–6, 352, 505ff.

[18] See the Commentary on 96, 215–99, 401–31, 487–584. Sophocles too delays Orestes' identification artificially when Orestes is persuaded not to approach the lamenting woman he thinks might be his sister (S. *El.* 77ff.). Even when the recognition is fully prepared it is delayed for over a hundred lines for emotional impact (S. *El.* 1115–1223). See also Cropp on *IT* 456–826, the recognition of Iphigenia and Orestes.

[19] See 215–99 n., 290–2 n.

keeping his disguise.[20] The mismatch between his 'heroic' mission and its appalling results is, however, suggested in many ways. Electra's expectations of heroic action emphasize his actual ordinariness (while saying much about her as well).[21] The figures of Achilles and Perseus stand as ambivalent role-models for Orestes, who re-enacts their destructiveness at a crude and unheroic level,[22] and whose victory is ironically imaged as a noble athletic triumph.[23]

Orestes' character is also shaped (as I suggested above) as a foil to Electra's. His disguise encourages us to focus on her predicament and emotions rather than on the matricide. After the recognition it is Electra who takes charge of the matricide, while Orestes concentrates on the killing of Aegisthus up to the moment when Clytemnestra arrives and Electra's will overwhelms his better judgement. Electra, not Orestes, confronts Clytemnestra. Even the confrontation with Aegisthus that is played out before the audience belongs to her.[24]

Euripides' Electra, on stage for more than three-quarters of the play, dominates the action no less than Sophocles', even though the focus is finally not on her deliverance but on the matricide. Her monody, the parodos, and her dialogue with the disguised Orestes are an exposition of her suffering. The recognition consists largely of her dialogue with the Old Man, while Orestes takes a passive role. She stands by during the planning of Aegisthus's murder, but this highlights the moment when she takes charge of Clytemnestra's. The action against Aegisthus revolves dramatically around her as she sends Orestes on his way, awaits the outcome fearfully, receives the victors on their return, and delivers her 'kakology' (907–56 n.) over the corpse. She is thus the emotional and the

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[20] Such as horror at Electra's bloodthirstiness (e.g. Grube 1961.302), a need for further assurances of security (Steidle 1968.72f.), a realization that only the Old Man can successfully identify him (Schwinge 1968.252–6), or a repressed fear of matricide (Aélion 1983.1.129f.). Against an 'irresolute' Orestes see e.g. Donzelli 1978.73–92, Lloyd 1986.11–13, Gärtner 2005.7f. Slater (2002–03) argues that an actor could have conveyed Orestes' irresolution through gesture and body language, but his actual words seem to me suggest otherwise (n. 16 above).

[21] 135–9, 274–7, 336–8, 524–6, 693, 982–4.

[22] See Commentary on 432–86 and allusions to Perseus in 885–7, 1221–3.

[23] See Commentary on 859–79, also 614 n., 880–5 n.

[24] Gärtner (2005.11) notes that Euripides went to considerable lengths to contrive these two confrontations by having Aegisthus's corpse brought to the cottage and delaying Clytemnestra's entry into it.

moral centre of the play. The crisis that follows shows how she compels Orestes to kill their mother, using Apollo's authority to overwhelm his recognition of the mother's natural claims on the children. Only after the murder does she express remorse: 'I burned with ruthless hatred for my mother here who gave me, her daughter, birth' (1183f.). Orestes too feels in the end that personal motives have been decisive, his deeds done 'in reprisal for my pains' (1181). Yet he can appeal to Apollo's compulsion as Electra cannot (1301ff.).

The early scenes portray Electra's hatred and calibrate our awareness of it. It is not frivolous or unreasonable,[25] for it is fuelled both by her need to see Agamemnon avenged and by her own very real sufferings: loss of royal status, a humiliating marriage, prolonged virginity and childlessness, a life of laborious poverty and physical deprivation. The sympathy of her husband and the Chorus suggests that these grievances are to be taken seriously.[26] Yet as she returns to them again and again Euripides seems to portray not merely the pathos of her situation but a spirit obsessed with a need for personal redress. This need is constantly merged with the need to avenge Agamemnon, in the monody, the parodos, the dialogue with Orestes, and her complaining speech. Hatred and grievance dominate her reception of Aegisthus's body and luring of Clytemnestra. The claims of Agamemnon and justice remain valid, but the personal grievances feed her vengefulness and lead to the single-minded hatred that drives the matricide.

This portrayal sets Euripides' Electra apart from Sophocles' heroine, who is almost a symbol of the family and dynasty awaiting deliverance through Orestes' return, and whose unbearable personal situation provides the driving emotional force of the play but is not distinctly self-centred.[27]

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[25] A view advanced by Wilamowitz (1883.229–33). Electra's final remorse cannot then be taken seriously, but is difficult to see how the play could have been acted to this effect in the Athenian theatre. Wilamowitz abandoned the view in the light of subsequent criticism (1935–72.I.466: cf. below, n. 97).

[26] See notes on 45–9, 54–81, 57–9, 77–9, 112–66, 194–8, 300–38, and in general T. Wilamowitz 1917.238–46, Steidle 1968.64–70, Lloyd 1986.2–9, Michelini 1987.187–94. The most forthright denial of the validity of Electra's complaints is Arnott 1981.182–6; cf. Kitto 1961.333f., Conacher 1967.204–6.

[27] The contrast is well made by von Fritz 1962.137–40. Recent studies have emphasized the traditional role of women in lamentation and the link between this and the pursuit of vendettas: see especially Foley 2001.21–55 and (on Sophocles' *Electra*) 145–71.

In Euripides' portrayal Electra's youth and femininity are significant.[28] She must be little more than twenty years old, and she has 'female' traits which Euripides' male-dominated audience would associate with her *thymos*, the prevalence of wilful emotion over reasoned restraint.[29] When she treats her husband and the Old Man officiously the effect is humorous and sentimental, but her perversity in these scenes foreshadows the wilfulness (*authadeia*) with which she drives Orestes to the matricide. Wilfulness and attachment to her father are highlighted in Clytemnestra's comments at a crucial moment.[30] 'Female' emotionalism is shown in her devotion to lamentation (a women's duty) and her near-suicidal anxiety as she awaits news of the attack on Aegisthus. A 'female' preoccupation with sex colours her speech over Aegisthus's body and her attitude to Clytemnestra's relationship with him.[31] Clytemnestra's luxurious self-indulgence is contrasted with Electra's poverty and squalor, especially in references to their physical appearance and clothing.[32] Electra's prolonged virginity, caught between maidenhood and womanhood by her false marriage with the Peasant, are reflected in her physical and emotional condition.[33] As a woman, lastly, Electra uses words as her chief weapon. The play revolves around her cries of outrage and lamentation, her appeal for Orestes' return, her arguments rejecting the Old Man's evidence for it, her intervention in the plotting, her denunciations of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, and her verbal onslaught on the reluctant Orestes.

Electra claims to be different from her mother, but her guile, vengefulness and ruthlessness are shared with the Aeschylean Clytemnestra.[34] Euripides points the similarity by reworking scenes from *Agamemnon*: Electra sword in hand awaiting the 'beacon-news' of Aegisthus's death; Electra greeting the carriage-borne queen and Trojan captives before her house; Electra luring her victim with ambiguous words and celebrating

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[28] She is hardly Kitto's 'middle-aged virago' (1961.333). She had not reached marriageable age, say fifteen, when Agamemnon was murdered (cf. 19–21). Orestes is returning, presumably, in the eighth subsequent year (cf. *Od.* 3. 304–8).

[29] On Greek (male) views about the distinctive characteristics of women see e.g. Dover 1974.98–102, Gould 1980.52–9 (mythical types), Foley 1981.

[30] 1102–4, 1117, cited above, p. 3.

[31] 60–3, 166, 207–12, 310, 1068–90, 1142–6.

[32] 184f., 239–41, 304–18, 998–1010, 1139f. Cf. Battezzato 1999–2000.359–61.

[33] See Commentary on 44, 167–212, 239.

[34] The comparison itself is Aeschylean: cf. *Cho.* 421f. with Garvie's note. On the character of Electra in *Choephori*, Auer 2006.

the impending sacrifice as the victim passes through the doors to her death; Electra insulting Aegisthus's body, and later (in pathetic contrast) distraught over the bodies of the queen and her lover lying before the doors.[35] When she rejects her mother's claim to justice she casts a shadow on her own case. Her regrets are prefigured by Clytemnestra's, as is her fear of public opinion.[36] The Aeschylean Electra prayed 'that I may prove far more right-minded than my mother, my hand more dutiful' (*Cho.* 140f.). Euripides shows her achieving instead her mother's 'unholiness'.[37]

The myth determined that Orestes should be his mother's slayer, but in this play Electra 'grasped the sword' along with him.[38] In portraying her *thymos* as the decisive factor, Euripides makes Electra a figure comparable with his Medea or Hecuba, each driven by extremes of suffering and alienation to extremes of vengeful brutality.[39] Like Medea, Electra retains at the end some sympathy from the Chorus,[40] and Castor gives both her and Orestes a formal extenuation and a promise of future prosperity, albeit in exile from Argos. This final resolution, blaming human error on divine irresponsibility, has provoked conflicting responses. For some it seems so incongruous that Euripides cannot have meant it to be taken seriously: rather it deconstructs the myth's traditional divine framework in the rationalistic spirit of late fifth century Athens, or advertises Euripides' condemnation of the matricide and of the characters of Electra and Orestes.[41] A more coherent, and to my mind more satisfying, view is that the gods who appear at the end of this and other plays of Euripides[42] were intended to set the events of the play within a broader perspective, emphasizing the limits of human knowledge and the unpredictability of

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[35] See Commentary on 696, 907–56, 988–97, 1139–46, 1172–1232.

[36] See Commentary on 1093–6 (justice), 1102–46 (regrets), 30, 902 (public opinion).

[37] See Commentary on 600, 1061, 1201–5.

[38] *El.* 1225. Again the point is underlined by transference to Electra of the words of the Aeschylean Orestes, e.g. at 281 and especially 959–87 (see Commentary).

[39] See further Harris 2001.276–80, and for Electra's vengefulness Burnett 1998. 240–6.

[40] *El.* 1201–5; cf. *Medea* 1273–93.

[41] E.g. Conacher 1976.209f., Gärtner 2005.24–8 with others cited in his note 117. For Vickers (1973.566) the 'attempt to reclaim sympathy for [Electra and Orestes] first by transferring blame to Apollo and then by evoking their pathetic future... leaves the reader or spectator in a state of moral and emotional confusion'.

[42] For Euripides' use of the *deus ex machina* see Commentary on 1233–7.

the larger forces that influence human action and experience.[43] Electra's *thymos* and Orestes' weakness have indeed driven them to commit a grievous wrong, but the wrong was due not only to their own natures but to divine intent and the network of circumstances within which they made their decisions. What they have done is condemned, but the extenuation and compensation offered by Castor suggest that this was a tragic event requiring a complex moral response.

DRAMATIC DESIGN

Structure. The play is shaped accordingly. Three 'movements' culminate in the reunion and collaboration of brother and sister, the triumphant tyrannicide, and the disastrous matricide.[44] *Heracles*, a nearly contemporary play, moves similarly through the reunion of the long-absent Heracles with his beleaguered wife and children, a triumphant vengeance over the usurping tyrant Lycus, and the disastrous turning of Heracles' power against his own family. Each play concludes with renewed exile and limited consolations, and in each the first two parts together make an almost complete drama, moving through suspense and complications to what seems to be a happy resolution. Tragedy then intrudes shockingly as the spirit of madness (Lyssa) drives Heracles to slaughter his family, and the vengeful Electra drives Orestes to kill his mother. The full significance of certain motifs and ironies in the preceding scenes begins to emerge, and the orderly alternation of scenes and choral odes gives way to a more fluid sequence of spoken and lyric scenes.[45]

The recognition requires a substantial dramatic preparation, and this is a further reason for Orestes' delayed identification. The plotting and actions against Aegisthus and Clytemnestra that follow have caused

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[43] See the valuable discussions of Euripidean gods in general and *deus* scenes in particular in Allan 2000.233–66 and Mastronarde 2010.181–95. Much of what Allan says about *Andromache* (another play in which Apollo's conduct is severely questioned) is applicable to *Electra*. A more optimistic conclusion is reached in *Iphigenia in Tauris* (Cropp 1995.39–42, 260), and a more bewildering one in *Orestes* (Mastronarde 192–5); on these plays see below, pp. 38–41.

[44] In Aristotle's terminology (*Poet.* 1452a22–b13) the reunion and the matricide involve recognitions with *peripeteia* (outcome contrary to that expected), and the matricide is also a *pathos* (painful experience).

[45] I make this comparison in more detail in Cropp 1986.

Electra to be classed as a 'recognition and intrigue' play, like Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen* and the fragmentary *Cresphontes*,[46] but the comparison reveals difference as well as similarity. In those plays the recognition is the real climax of the play, directing the protagonists towards a release from their hardships which is then achieved through the intrigue. *Electra* works by moving towards such a resolution in its first two movements, only to veer from success to disaster in the third.

There is a further effect in Euripides' handling of the recognition. In *Choephori*, when Orestes declares himself promptly to Electra, her presence and claims are added to the motives compelling him to his fateful act and assuring him of its justice; the *kommos* and following dialogue dramatize this powerfully (*Cho.* 306–509). In Sophocles' *Electra* the reunion is delayed until near the end, so that Electra's release is combined with the restoration of the house through the murders. Euripides, on the other hand, brings the two together early in the play but does not allow them to communicate as brother and sister before the recognition, which happens almost by chance. Once reunited, they interact only in preparing the murders, receiving Aegisthus's body, reacting to Clytemnestra's approach, and performing and then lamenting the matricide. Orestes acts alone in killing Aegisthus, and Euripides' design separates that murder from the matricide,[47] whereas the later scenes of interaction show Electra's emotions and will dominating Orestes and making him more an instrument than an agent of the matricide. This is the outcome of their brief coming together, and after this they depart into permanent separation.

Actors and minor characters. The leading member of Euripides' three-actor group will have played Electra's part with its extensive lyrics and highly charged rhetoric. Another may have played Orestes only (unless he

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[46] On *Cresphontes* and its similarities with the *Electras* of Euripides and Sophocles see T. Wilamowitz 1917.251–6, Donzelli 1978.54 n. 129, Harder 1985. 14–18, Michelini 1987.335f., Collard–Cropp–Lee 2009.124f. *Alexandros*, the first play of the 'Trojan' trilogy of 415, had (like *Ion*) an intrigue leading to the recognition (with *peripeteia*) of mother and son: plot summary in Collard–Cropp 2008a.33–7.

[47] In *Choephori* Orestes kills Aegisthus in the palace, then catches Clytemnestra outside. Sophocles reverses the order, so that Orestes' mission culminates in the killing of Aegisthus. Euripides declines to confront Clytemnestra with Aegisthus's corpse (E. *El.* 959–61) as Sophocles confronts Aegisthus with Clytemnestra's (S. *El.* 1474f.).

also played the Messenger reporting Orestes' offstage exploit and exiting at 857 to re-enter as Orestes twenty lines later). The third actor played successively the Peasant, the Old Man, probably the Messenger, Clytemnestra, and finally Castor. Other personnel are non-speaking: Pylades (82–5 n., 967–8 nn.), Polydeuces, a servant of Electra (140 n., 500 n.), servants of Orestes and Pylades (82–111 n., 393f.), and lastly male attendants and Trojan slave-women with Clytemnestra (988–97 n., 1133–8 n.).

Each of the supporting characters stands in a particular relationship with the two principals, so that we see Electra and Orestes from several different points of view. We have seen how Electra's confrontation with Clytemnestra reflects upon her, and how the limited consolation offered by Castor (cousin to Orestes and Electra and once her prospective husband, 312f., but now blessed with divinity) emphasizes the specifically human nature of their predicament.[48] The earlier, humble figures provide a different kind of perspective. The Peasant belongs to the type of 'hardworking countryman untouched by the corrupting influence of the city and politics' celebrated in Hesiod's *Works and Days* and later portrayed by Euripides in the *autourgos* (smallholder) of *Orestes* 917–30.[49] His simple nobility and reliance on proverbial certainties are a model of everyday morality which reflects negatively on Orestes and Electra; yet they acknowledge his values and he theirs,[50] and the Peasant himself fails to understand fully the differences between himself and Electra in her grief and debasement.[51] While it is true that they fail to match his morality, it is also true that their situation is more complicated, and more fraught with moral risk, than his simpler experience and viewpoint will comprehend. Similarly the Old Man,[52] another humble and humorously sketched figure with opinions on nobility (550f.), intuitively guesses Orestes' presence when Electra cannot imagine it, yet when they plan the matricide together he shows no more moral insight than she does.

The Chorus. The Greek tragic chorus was a complex entity, both implicated in the drama and capable of commenting on it from a more detached

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[48] See also the Commentary on 1093–6, 1233–7.

[49] The word *autourgos* is not used in *Electra*. For discussions in the Commentary of his character and role see Index, 'Peasant'; further, Donzelli 1978.227–69, Carter 1986.76–98, Michelini 1987.194–9, 334f., Goff 1999–2000.101–5.

[50] 67–76, 262, 364–95; 45–9.

[51] 54–81 n., 64–6, 77–9 n., 421–5.

[52] For details in the Commentary see Index, 'Old Man'.

point of view.[53] The second of these functions reflects the traditional role of choruses in Greek culture as mouthpieces of mythical/historical truths and of communal moral and religious values. The tragic poet might use the chorus to guide the audience's reactions to the developing drama, or to misguide them or dramatize the chorus's own imperfect understanding of events. Choruses speak with varying degrees of authority, depending in part on their social status (male or female, free or slave, higher or lower ranked). Euripides often used choruses of subordinate women (either free or enslaved) who identify closely with the female characters who are central to many of his plays. This is the case in *Electra*, where the Chorus consists of young country women who are friendly and sympathetic towards Electra. Their relationship is established in the Parodos (167–212 n.) as they urge her to moderate her grieving and join the festival of Hera. Their normality is contrasted (like the Peasant's) with the painful artificiality of Electra's situation. Their attempt to console her, while emphasizing her absorption in her own plight, also shows their inability to understand it fully (194–8 n.). This rather unimaginative support for Electra characterizes the Chorus throughout the play. They welcome the possibility of Orestes' return (401ff.), rejoice when it materializes (585ff.), share Electra's anxiety over the attack on Aegisthus (747ff.), rejoice again at its success (859ff.), and second her declaration that Aegisthus has died justly (957f.). They are complicit in luring Clytemnestra to her death and encourage Electra's condemnation of her (1051ff.). Their bland assumption that the gods will put things right for Electra and Orestes and bring Aegisthus and Clytemnestra to justice[54] is undisturbed up to the moment of Clytemnestra's death, and even then they describe the matricide as 'terrible but just' (1168ff., 1185ff.), and sympathize with the children's remorse rather than roundly condemning what they have done (1201ff. etc.).

The Chorus, then, for the most part shares the viewpoint of Electra and Orestes and does not criticize or warn them explicitly (as for example the Chorus of elders in Sophocles' *Antigone* criticizes and warns both Antigone and Creon). Deeper reflections are however conveyed in the two large choral odes (431ff., 699ff.), not so much in terms of the Chorus's conscious thought as of what their narratives imply for an attentive

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[53] On Euripidean choruses in general see Mastronarde 2010.88–152. For detailed discussions of the Chorus in *Electra*, Hose 1990–1.1.170–8 and 2.45–54, Baur 1997.

[54] *El.* 195–7, 482–6, 590f., 876–8, 957f.

audience member. These odes delve into the realm of myth, and for this purpose the Chorus acquires a more knowledgeable voice than one might expect of Electra's rustic neighbours, approximating the authoritative voice of non-dramatic choral lyric.[55] In their dramatic persona the women draw rather simple conclusions from their narratives: Clytemnestra deserves to die for degrading the heroism of the Trojan campaign (479ff.), and she should have learned from the story of Zeus's reaction to Thyestes' treachery even if it was 'only a myth' (737ff.). But the narratives themselves carry darker implications for anyone reflecting on the destruction wrought by Achilles in his noble armour, the sad ends of Achilles himself and the heroes pictured on his shield, and the appalling revenge which Atreus took on Thyestes. The odes, then, have a special function in contextualizing the events of the play, sounding a warning about the consequences of Orestes' return which is not evident either to the characters or to the Chorus-women in their dramatic role.[56]

Location and staging. The ordinary world is also represented by the rustic setting into which Euripides has transplanted Electra and her story, turning her into the sequestered princess whose destiny in other legends is to bear a child who will overcome his humble origins and reclaim his inherited greatness.[57] The words and movements of the play keep the remoteness and poverty of her surroundings well in mind, for example in the opening words of the Peasant as he surveys the Inachus valley, his departure to the fields and Electra's to the spring, the arrivals of the Chorus and the Old Man, the distant shouts portending the death of Aegisthus, and the sighting of Clytemnestra.[58] This rustic setting is significantly distanced from the city and the palace of Agamemnon, the true objects of Orestes' return which the matricide will condemn him never to

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[55] The shift into myth is emphasized at the beginning of each ode ('Famous ships...', 432; 'so the report endures...', 700f.), and the incongruity of the women's knowledge is advertised when they claim to have heard about Achilles' shield from a traveller in the port of Argos (452ff.) and question the tradition that Zeus changed the course of the sun to confirm Atreus's claim to the throne of Mycenae (737ff.).

[56] For detailed discussion of this point see the Commentary on 432–86 and 699–746.

[57] See Commentary on 1–212, 652–8.

[58] Lines 1, 76ff., 167ff., 487ff., 747ff., 962f.

possess.[59] The change of locale puts the revenge action into a new perspective by contrast with the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In *Choephori* the tomb of Agamemnon provides a sacral ambience for Electra's and Orestes' communications with their dead father and the powers of the underworld, validating their act as one of righteous vengeance and restoration. In Sophocles' play the action outside the palace highlights Electra's embattled isolation, her despair at the news of Orestes' death, and the release achieved as Orestes overthrows the usurpers and reclaims his heritage. By eliminating the palace/tomb context and placing the action in an rustic landscape Euripides lowers the level of the revenge towards that of an ordinary human conflict driven by ordinary human passions.[60]

For the stage setting we can suppose some painting or draping of the stage building (*skênê*) to make what often represented a palace look like a humble cottage (although the imposing double doors of the stage building seem to have remained in sight or at least in mind).[61] Some entrances through the door recall equivalent moments in the *Oresteia*: Orestes entering the cottage with an assurance of his faith in Apollo (397ff.), Electra leaving the Chorus to await news of the distant action (691ff.), Electra taunting Clytemnestra as she goes in to her death (1139ff.), the laying out of the bodies (1172ff.). As for the side-entrances (*eisodoi*), it is convenient to assume that one of them ('A' in my translation) was used mainly for entrances from and exits to the local vicinity, the other ('B') for arrivals from and departures to more distant parts, although this later convention cannot be taken for granted for the fifth century.[62] Costumes

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[59] The dislocation is emphasized, e.g. 6f., 94, 297–9, 305f., 314–22, 595, 615.

[60] For these contrasts see especially Malhadas 1989, Said 1993.180–4, Luschnig 1995.86–120, Medda 2007.

[61] Details of staging are addressed in the Commentary: see Index, 'staging, stage-movements'. In general see Hammond 1984 (questionable at several points), Marshall 1999–2000. For the double doors see 357 n. Hammond suggests an additional side-door was used, but this seems too elaborate for the cottage and there is no positive indication in the text. He also suggests that the main door is at first a yard-gate and later the house-door, but this rests on a misinterpretation of line 342 (see note there).

[62] See e.g. Hourmouziades 1965.77, 128–36, Said 1989.107 n. 3, 1993.180f. The directions of Clytemnestra's entrance and Orestes' final exit are uncertain (see Commentary, 988–97 n., 1357–9 n.). For the entry of the Dioscuri *ex machina* see 1233–7 n.

and masks will have emphasized Electra's degradation and continual mourning, the rustic poverty of the Peasant, Old Man and Chorus, and in contrast the luxury of Clytemnestra and her Trojan slave-women.[63]

Thematic motifs. Recurrent ideas and images reinforce the play's emotional and moral tones, especially in its sung parts (monody and parodos, choral odes, celebrations of the reunion and the tyrannicide, the matricide and its aftermath). Some of its imagery reinforces the physical setting discussed in the previous section. The innocent rustic context of the murders (777–80 n.) is anticipated in the choral odes as Achilles leaves the purity of Cheiron's mountain dwelling for the battlefield at Troy (432–86 n.) and the golden lamb brought by Pan from the mountains to Mycenae initiates the murderous feud between Atreus and Thyestes (699–726). Elements of communal life are also important as Electra and Orestes seek to escape from their exiles. Electra's laments are contrasted with the ritual festivities of Argos from which her grief isolates her (175ff., 310f.) and the matricide will for ever exclude her (1198f.). Moments of optimism are marked as she is drawn into the solidarity of the Chorus's singing and dancing (590ff., 860ff.), and the same sense of fleeting joy appears in the choral odes — Nereids and dolphins dancing as Agamemnon's expedition sets out (432ff.), the people of Mycenae celebrating the golden lamb (713ff.).

Other motifs resonate with the poetic tradition of the Oresteia.[64] The murder of Agamemnon after his triumph at Troy is recalled in the prologue (2ff.), in Electra's monody (160ff.), and in the first stasimon (479ff.). Electra sees Orestes' defeat of Aegisthus as matching his father's triumph (880f.), but during the matricide the recollection of the father's murder accents not only the justice of Clytemnestra's punishment but the wrongness of the new familial crime (1147ff.). Images of sun, daylight and fire, which in Aeschylus's trilogy suggest joy and liberation succeeding the nocturnal darkness of grief and oppression, recur in Euripides' play but reach their climax with the death of Aegisthus and are lost after that point.[65] Orestes himself is imaged as a youthful athlete emulating his father's virtue in his 'contest' with Aegisthus (cf. 614 n.), and Aegisthus

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[63] See 146ff., 181ff., 239ff., 303ff. (Electra), 501f., (Old Man), 314ff., 966, 1000ff. (Clytemnestra and her women). For Orestes and Pylades, 82–111 n.

[64] For Aeschylus's imagery in particular see Garvie 1986.xxxvi–xxxviii with bibliography in note 84.

[65] Nocturnal grief 54 n., 141, 181; daylight, sun, fire 449 n., 585–95 n., 866–8 n.

is the loser in his 'race' with justice (953ff.), but the image of Orestes as a heroic monster-slayer has dark undertones (432–86 n.), and at the end he must run in terror from his mother's monstrous Furies (1252f., 1342–6).

The figure of the athlete is linked with questions about nobility and morality which recur throughout this and other plays of Euripides, reflecting contemporary debates over traditional values and social order. After defeating Aegisthus Orestes is welcomed and crowned like an Olympic victor (854–89 n.), but in his disguised persona he has denigrated mere athletic achievement: neither inherited status nor wealth nor physical prowess are guarantees of true virtue ('nobility' in the moral sense), which can only be judged through acquaintance with an individual's own nature and conduct (367–90 n.). In the same vein the Old Man remarks that Electra's visitors with their athletic demeanour look noble but may nevertheless be 'no good' (*kakoi*, 549ff.). The Peasant's poverty and lowly circumstances are pointedly contrasted with his personal nobility and 'right-mindedness' (*sôphrosunê*), while Aegisthus's and Clytemnestra's attachment to wealth and luxury signals their corruption.[66] That corruption is linked with ignorance and bad judgement (as Electra insists repeatedly in her denunciation of Aegisthus's corpse), whereas morality requires intelligence and sensibility. The disguised Orestes makes this point not only in his praise of the Peasant and denigration of 'brainless' athletes (383–8), but also when he reacts emotionally on hearing of the abuse of his father's corpse and explains this as the natural pity (*oiktos*) of a sensitive man (290–6 nn.). Later a similar pity almost persuades him to spare his mother but is contemptuously dismissed by Electra (967ff.).

The unnaturalness of the matricide is starkly conveyed through images of animal sacrifice, the sanctified killing that was central to the ritual life of ancient Greece. The language and imagery of animal sacrifice and its corruption (human sacrifice, murder as a 'sacrificial' act) are pervasive in Greek tragedy and in the Oresteia tradition, above all in Aeschylus's *Oresteia* with the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the murders of Agamemnon, Cassandra and Clytemnestra, and the Erinyes' pursuit of Orestes as their sacrificial victim.[67] In *Electra* murder and sacrifice are constantly intertwined, except that Orestes' offering of a sheep at his father's tomb (92, 514f.) and the Argives' sacrifice for Hera (167–212 n.) stand as proper

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[66] The Peasant 35–8 n., 45ff., 253, 262, 361ff., 367ff., 426–31 n.; Aegisthus and Clytemnestra 314ff., 938ff., 966, 988ff., 1088ff., 1139f.

[67] On sacrificial motifs in the *Oresteia* see Zeitlin 1965, Lebeck 1971.33–6, 60–3, Pucci 1992; in Euripides, Foley 1985, Henrichs 2000; in *Electra*, Mirto 1980.

acts of piety in contrast with what follows. Electra remembers the ritualistic slaughter (*sphagê*) of Agamemnon celebrated by Aeschylus's Clytemnestra,[68] and similar language surrounds the anticipation and execution of the murders of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.[69] The killing of Aegisthus is literally a perversion of his sacrifice for the Nymphs (itself tainted by its purpose of securing his criminal prosperity), as Orestes strikes him down over the carcass of his animal victim. Clytemnestra becomes the victim of a sacrifice for Electra's imaginary child (1141), and a final sacrificial image shows Orestes veiling his eyes in horror as his mother's executioner (1221–3).

EURIPIDES AND THE ORESTEIA TRADITION

The story was an old and familiar one.[70] Orestes' return was already celebrated in the *Odyssey*, where Agamemnon's murder is an awful warning for Odysseus, Aegisthus a parallel to the treacherous and hybristic suitors, and Orestes a role-model for Telemachus.[71] The story there is largely male-oriented. Clytemnestra's betrayal of her husband is discussed (with some sympathy by Nestor, none by Agamemnon himself),[72] but the poem is vague or even evasive about her part in the killing of

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[68] *Ag.* 1379ff; *El.* 123 n., 157–8 n., 279, 1142–4 n.

[69] Aegisthus 690–2, 747–858, 1142–4; Clytemnestra 279–82, 485–6, 959–61, 1141–4, 1174, 1221–3, 1243. See notes on these in the Commentary.

[70] I concentrate on matters relevant to the play. For details see Commentary on 8–10, 154–60 (Agamemnon's murder), 18 (Orestes' refuge), 16, 504–8 (nurse and tutor), 44 (Electra's virginity), 60–3 (Clytemnestra's children by Aegisthus), 487–584 *passim* (recognition and tokens), 747–858 (Aegisthus's murder), 1250–75 (Orestes after the matricide), 1249 (Electra's marriage with Pylades). For fuller discussions of the Oresteia in early Greek literature and art see Vermeule 1966, Davies 1969, Prag 1985, Garvie 1986.ix–xxvi, March 1987.81–98, Gantz 1993.676–86, and the richly illustrated articles in *LIMC* including 'Agamemnon', 'Aigisthos', 'Elektra', 'Erinyes', 'Klytaimestra', 'Orestes'.

[71] *Od.* 1.35–43, 298–300; 3.193–8, 248–312; 4.91–2, 512–47; 11.387–464; 24.19–34, 199–202. For relevant details of the *Odyssey* see Commentary on 8–10, 160–1, 336–8, 747–858, 917, 1142–4 (all on Agamemnon's death), 1032–4 (Cassandra), 1161–2 (seduction of Clytemnestra), 896–8 (burials of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra), 1250–1, 1254–5 (Orestes later), 1279–81 (Menelaus's return).

[72] *Od.* 3.263ff., 11.421ff., 24.199ff.

Agamemnon and Orestes' part in the killing of his mother.[73] No sister is mentioned, but a sister has no relevance to the situation in the *Odyssey* and this hardly proves that she was unknown in the tradition of the time; nor does her absence from the very brief extant summary of the epic poem *Nostoi* ('Returns') which ended with the returns of Orestes and Menelaus.[74] Still, the names of Agamemnon's daughters in the *Iliad* and the *Cypria* did not include Electra,[75] and amongst epic poems only the 6th-century Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* is known to have named her, adding that Orestes killed both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.[76]

In other poetry of the sixth century the story handled by the tragedians begins to emerge clearly. A forerunner of Stesichorus, Xanthus, is said to have identified Electra with Homer's Laodice, relating her name to her unmarried state (*ἄλεκτρος*, 'unbedded').[77] This seems to lay down or presuppose the nucleus of a story about her. From Stesichorus's own *Oresteia* we have several relevant points. He preferred Sparta to Mycenae or Argos as a setting, probably for reasons of patronage and the politics of the time. He used the lock of Orestes' hair as a key to his recognition, which requires a recognizer, probably Electra. He included a dream of Clytemnestra portending her punishment, a motif taken up by Aeschylus and Sophocles (though not by Euripides), which suggests that her guilt and Orestes' punishment of her were central in his account. There was a nurse and a pursuit by Furies (again, the premise must be matricide), and Apollo promising Orestes a bow for his protection from them.[78] The poem filled at least two 'books' (i.e. papyrus rolls) and must have resembled in style and scope his *Geryoneis*, which related Heracles' conflict with

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[73] For the former see Commentary on 8–10, for the latter *Od.* 3.309f.

[74] 'Then comes the vengeance of Orestes and Pylades for the murder of Agamemnon by Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, and the return of Menelaus to his own land' (from the very brief summary in Proclus's *Chrestomatheia*, *GEF* p. 157).

[75] *Iliad* 9.145 ~ 287, 'Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa'. The *Cypria* seems to have mentioned these *plus* Iphigenia (fr. 20 *GEF* = schol. S. *El.* 157).

[76] Hes. fr. 23(a).15f. 'Iphimede [= Iphigenia]...and Electra...', 28–30 '(Orestes) took vengeance on his father's murderer and killed his own transgressing mother'. West 1985.130–7 dates the *Catalogue* between 580 and 520, perhaps after Stesichorus's *Oresteia*.

[77] Frs. 699, 700 *PMG*.

[78] Frs. 210–9 *PMGF*, esp. 216 (Sparta), 217 (lock, pursuit, bow), 218 (nurse), 219 (dream). The nurse is a forerunner of Euripides' Old Man: see Commentary, 16 n.; also 518–44 n. on the lock, 1250–1 n. and 1258–63 n. on the pursuit.

Geryon in some two thousand lines and is a little better known to us through the accident of a papyrus discovery.[79]

Stesichorus's poem was the most influential pre-dramatic version of the story,[80] including the essential narrative nucleus: the sacrifice of Iphigenia,[81] the murder of Agamemnon (probably with Clytemnestra striking the death-blow with an axe),[82] Orestes' return from exile and his recognition, the matricide (no doubt accompanied by the murder of Aegisthus), the pursuit of Orestes by Clytemnestra's Furies, and Apollo's assistance to him (presumably leading in some way to his deliverance). How far his poem anticipated the tragedians' shaping and interpretation of the story, and how prominent Electra was in it, remain uncertain, but the surviving details suggest that he made Orestes an instrument of Apollo, emphasizing the justice of the matricide.[83] He may nevertheless have imparted some pathos to Clytemnestra's death, as he did to the death of the monstrous Geryon following a tender parting scene with his mother.[84]

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[79] P. Oxy. 2617. For all the fragments of the poem see *PMGF* pp. 152–75. Texts with English translations in Campbell 1991.64–89.

[80] The ancient commentator citing fr. 217 remarks that after Homer and Hesiod later poets 'agree above all with Stesichorus'. March (1987.92–8) posits a major contribution by Simonides, but Simonides' placing of Agamemnon's palace in Lacedaemon (fr. 549 *PMG* = Stesichorus fr. 216 *PMGF*) was not necessarily linked with the Orestes story. Pindar's brief and allusive narrative in *Pythian* 11.17–37 has several Stesichorean features: a Spartan setting, a central role for Clytemnestra and her guilt (she now kills Agamemnon with her own 'powerful hands'), the sacrifice of Iphigenia as a motive (though this is subordinated to her adultery with Aegisthus), Orestes' rescue by a nurse and refuge in Phocis, and his return to wreak a justified vengeance: on all this see Neschke 1986.291–5, Finglass 2007a.34–47, 87–109, and for the date (probably 474 rather than 454) Finglass 2007a.5–19.

[81] Cf. frs. 215, 217.25–7 *PMGF*.

[82] See Commentary on line 160.

[83] Neschke 1986 suggests that the poem was composed for a Spartan festival of Apollo in his role as patron of Sparta's male-oriented warrior society, and that its treatment of the sacrifice of Iphigenia (demanded by Artemis, alleviated by the girl's deification) and of Clytemnestra's dream (with its image of the axe-slain king) will have emphasized Agamemnon's innocence and, correspondingly, Clytemnestra's guilt.

[84] Frs. S 12, S 13, S 15 *PMGF*.

The predramatic pictorial tradition is also of interest.[85] What we know of it resembles what we know of the epic poetry. The main subjects are Agamemnon's death and Orestes vengeance, with Clytemnestra often involved but seldom if ever explicitly portrayed as Orestes' victim.[86] But a metope from Foce del Sele in southern Italy dated about 570 B.C. (probably before Stesichorus's poem) seems to show Orestes attacked by an Fury in the form of a snake, which would certainly point to the problem of matricide.[87] Electra is known for certain in the pictorial tradition only from about 480 B.C., in portrayals of the killings of Agamemnon and Aegisthus and her meeting with Orestes at Agamemnon's tomb.

The tragedians shaped their plays around the motifs of Clytemnestra's dream, the offerings at Agamemnon's tomb, Orestes' disguise and recognition, the reunion of brother and sister, the tyrannicide, the matricide, and the Furies. Shifts and developments in emphasis were introduced as narrative was transformed into drama. The tragic chorus and actors' song are at the heart of some scenes (for example the libation scene and *kommos* in Aeschylus's *Choephori*, the monodies and parodoi of both *Electras*). Others were generated by tragedy's theatrical setting (the offstage murders in both *Electras*, the urn scene in Sophocles' play), others again by the confrontations of actors in the debating duels of the *Electras* or in stichomythiai ranging from Orestes' curt encounter with his mother in Aeschylus (*Cho.* 908ff.) to his elaborate conversation with Electra and the later plotting scene in Euripides (*El.* 220ff., 612ff.).

Aeschylus's *Oresteia* was in many ways definitive, and its presence in Euripides' play is pervasive. The broad design of Euripides' plot follows *Choephori*: the reunion and preparation of the murders (followed in each play by a central choral ode), Orestes arriving in disguise as a guest and killing Aegisthus, the climactic act of matricide, and the beginning of the Furies' pursuit. But Aeschylus confronts Orestes with Clytemnestra both

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[85] For references see n. 70 above. Some Oresteia episodes are represented sparsely in the art of the 440s and 430s, and abundantly in the 4th century, but they are remarkably lacking in the immediate period of Euripides' play.

[86] Prag (1985.6–9 with Pl. 5) lists three early 7th-century representations (all disputed) of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra being led to their deaths, and many of Orestes killing Aegisthus especially in early Attic Red-Figure (pp. 10–34 with Plates 6–21), but none of the actual matricide before the end of the 5th century (though its identification in a 6th-century bronze strip from Olympia is quite widely accepted: see Prag 1985.35–43, Garvie 1986.xvi).

[87] See Commentary, 1250–1 n.

before and after the killing of Aegisthus, whereas Euripides removes the killings from the palace, separates them from each other, and does not confront Orestes with Clytemnestra at all. This alteration points the contrast between the two killings which is crucial for Euripides, as do many modifications of detail where Aeschylus's trilogy is recalled in words, actions, stage-presentation and imagery.[88] Besides transferring to Electra motifs from the Aeschylean Clytemnestra (and from his Orestes and Pylades),[89] Euripides also transfers motifs from Agamemnon to Aegisthus in the imaging of their murders, and from Agamemnon to Clytemnestra in both her entry and her exit to her death, thus shifting the emotional balance between avengers and victims.[90] Crises from *Choephori* are put in a different light (Orestes' hesitation at the sight of his mother, the impact of her baring her breast), as are that play's assurances about Apollo's guidance of Orestes.[91]

When *Electra* was produced, the tradition of tragic drama at Athens was more than a century old, and the poetic tradition of the *Oresteia* close to three centuries. While thoroughly attuned to these traditions, Euripides also advertised the individuality of his own contributions in poetic and dramatic style, and in the shaping and interpretation of the myth.[92] He tells the story of Orestes with his characteristic concentration on ordinary human life, on emotions, and on the uncertainty of outcomes and divine purposes. It has often been thought that by doing so he meant to subvert or discredit the traditional 'heroic' meaning of the story, or specifically the meaning given to it by Aeschylus. But this may exaggerate both the simplicity and uniformity of the tradition and the negativity of Euripides' attitude to it. Certainly he was not the first to see the matricide as problematic. It may or may not be significant that the subject is skirted both in the *Odyssey* and in the archaic iconography, and we know very little about how it was presented in other archaic poetry. Yet it is difficult to imagine that a myth about mother-killing did not frame it as a problem, and the problem is clearly enough a central feature of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, which anticipates *Electra* in its treatment of the guilt of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, the repellent and dubious nature of the matricide (Aeschylus's Orestes is condemned by half the Athenian jury

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[88] See Index, 'Aeschylus' for comparisons made in the Commentary.

[89] See above, n. 38 and Commentary on line 967.

[90] Aegisthus 747–858 n., 1143 n.; Clytemnestra 988–97 n., 1139–46 n.

[91] Crises 967 n., 1206–9 n.; Apollo's guidance 399–400 n., 1177 n., 1245–8 n.

[92] The clearest example is the recognition scene: see 487–584 n.

and saved from the Furies only by a special assertion of divine will), Orestes' motives (combining personal and dynastic restoration with divine instruction and duty to his father's vengeful spirit),[93] and even Electra's hatred for her mother.[94] *Choephori* itself shows Orestes recognizing at the last moment what it means for him to kill his mother, and after following a similar course to *Agamemnon* the play finishes on the same note of frustration and the family's subjection to *âtê*.[95] Orestes clings to the justice of his deed, but the problem of this kind of justice remains to be resolved in *Eumenides*. There Athena (not Apollo) imposes his acquittal and assigns the Erinyes a civilized role within her city's religious and legal system, thus providing a resolution that has little or nothing to do with the heroic tradition and much to do with the ideology of mid-fifth century Athens. *Electra* is in many ways a Euripidean *Choephori*. Working in a more sceptical era, and in a dramatic mode more focused on tragic pathos, Euripides reduced the universal and 'historical' sense and perspective conveyed in Aeschylus's trilogy through the heritage of curse and guilt, the fixing of human tragedy within a framework of Olympian and chthonic forces, and the emergence from continuing evil of ultimate good. The certainty that Apollo implements the will of Zeus (A. *Eum.* 616ff.) is replaced by a sense of his unwisdom, which must be accepted without being understood (*El.* 1245–8, 1301–7). Lacking a secure divine framework, the tragedy lies in the defeat of reason and human instinct by emotion and the accumulation of wrongs. Unlike Aeschylus, Euripides subordinates his Orestes to the emotions and will of Electra, submits him to remorse and recognition of his wrongdoing, and banishes him from Argos.[96]

In focusing on human dimensions, and on Electra, Euripides resembles Sophocles. He cannot confidently be said to have followed

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[93] In *Choephori* 246–305 Orestes' statement of the sanctions threatened by Apollo should he not avenge his father are preceded and followed by more personal motives. Sophocles' Orestes aims both to avenge his father and to reclaim his house's wealth (S. *El.* 69–72, cf. 1288–91).

[94] The material and personal motives of Electra that Euripides emphasizes are all present in *Choephori*, especially 124–51, 418–22, 444–50.

[95] For the tragic impact of *Choephori* see e.g. Garvie 1986.xxxi–xli, Conacher 1987.102.

[96] Contrast Electra's subordination to Orestes (*Cho.* 235–43), Orestes' unremorseful defence of the matricide (*Cho.* 972–1043, *Eum.* 443–69, 588–613) and his happy return to Argos once rid of the Furies' persecution (*Eum.* 754–77).

him, for while there is clearly a close relationship between their two plays, it is not clear which preceded and influenced the other.[97] Comparisons are none the less revealing when the style, techniques and tragic impact of the two plays are considered. Sophocles concentrates even more exclusively on Electra — her loyalty to Agamemnon in the face of persecution by Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, her reactions to a false report of Orestes' death, her reunion with him as he enters the palace under cover of the false report, her deliverance through his triumph over the usurpers. The matricide is subordinated to this deliverance and triumph, and the sufferings and will of Electra become, on the face of it at least, the instruments of genuine justice and restoration.[98]

The two *Electras* are very similar in design. Both have introductory scenes set at daybreak including a prologue, a monody of Electra, and a parodos shared between Electra and a friendly but chiding chorus. Both have speeches of Electra describing her sufferings (S. *El.* 254–309, E. *El.* 300–38). Both artificially delay the recognition of Orestes which is the climax of the first episode of *Choephori*. Both have similar patterns leading to the recognition: Sophocles' Chrysothemis and Euripides' Old Man each take offerings to Agamemnon's tomb, find evidence of Orestes' visit, and report this to a disbelieving Electra (S. *El.* 871ff., E. *El.* 487ff.). Both confront Electra with Clytemnestra in a debate scene (S. *El.* 516–659, E. *El.* 998–1123). Many more similarities of detail will be noted in the Commentary,[99] and most can be made to cut either (or neither) way in the argument about priority; none comes close to being decisive. When Euripides makes Clytemnestra remorseful ('I am not so very glad at what

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[97] Euripides' priority was asserted by Wilamowitz 1883, esp. 221–3, 242–9, but he was persuaded otherwise by Steiger 1897 (see Braun 2000). History of the question and bibliography: Matthiessen 1964.81–8, Vögler 1967.11–51. The problem continues to be debated inconclusively, e.g. (Euripides first) Ronnet 1979, Bremer 1991, Deforge 1997/2010, Müller 2000, March 2001.20–2; (Sophocles first) Michelini 1987.199–202, 334–7, Alonge 2007; (undecided) Harder 1995, Finglass 2007b.1–4. Finglass rightly remarks that '[d]ifferences between the *Electra* plays are often better understood as the result of different responses to Aeschylus than as the later *Electra* reacting to the earlier'.

[98] This is not to say that Sophocles neglects the costs of achieving this justice and restoration, especially the hardening of Electra's character through her sufferings and the disruption of Agamemnon's family. Finglass (2007b.8–10) gives a balanced summary of the debate between 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' interpretations of the play.

[99] See Index, 'Sophocles, *Electra*'.

I have done', E. *El.* 1105–6), is he differentiating her from Sophocles' defiant Clytemnestra ('I am not downcast at what I have done', S. *El.* 549–50), or did Sophocles readjust the Euripidean point? Occasionally Euripides seems to advertise a difference, for example in excluding a false report of Orestes' death or rejecting the idea of mutilating Aegisthus's body, but these were features of the tradition before either Euripides or Sophocles.[100]

The two playwrights' purposes have been variously assessed. Was Sophocles restoring the dignity of the tradition after Euripides had undermined it (as Wilamowitz contended), or was Euripides protesting against what he saw as Sophocles' simplistic and morally repellent treatment of the story (as Steiger replied)? To decide this we need to know which came first, and these doctrinaire purposes were not necessarily decisive in any case. Recent discussions have relied mainly on formal comparisons.[101] The strongest argument for Sophocles' priority rests on Electra's role. In *Choephori* she is a secondary figure and her role ends after the recognition and the *kommos*. In Euripides she is not only central but controls the plot against Clytemnestra, which is turned from a triumph into a tragedy. It is less easy to see this as a direct development from Aeschylus than as a further step along a path broken by Sophocles whose play, focusing on the emotions and will of the beleaguered (but still largely passive) heroine, might be seen as a typically Sophoclean development of materials available in the earlier tradition. Several features in Euripides' play would then be seen as developing from Sophocles', especially the false marriage and change of locale (making Electra more independent and focal), Electra's ignorance of Orestes' return used as a vehicle for exposition and suspense, the elimination of Clytemnestra's dream and the false report of Orestes' death (the latter replaced by the false childbirth centred on Electra), the recognition scene built on a chance visit to the tomb by the Old Man (whereas Sophocles' Chrysothemis, like Aeschylus's Electra, is sent because of Clytemnestra's dream), and the *agôn* delayed so that it becomes a vehicle for pathos and moral ambivalence.

Comparable arguments for Euripides' priority might seem to carry less weight. Sophocles gives rather cursory motivations for the early comings

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[100] See Commentary on 229, 418–9, 896–8. Other tragedians may have contributed to the tradition, but in fact there is no trace of other tragedies on this subject in the fifth century. Perhaps no one else was willing to make the attempt.

[101] Most thorough is Vögler 1967, favouring Sophocles' priority.

and goings of Orestes, his tutor and the Chorus, and for Electra's confrontation with Clytemnestra, but that is unlikely to be a mismanaged replication of Euripides. Chrysothemis, who is merely named as a daughter of Agamemnon in the *Iliad*,[102] is absent from Euripides' *Electra* but important in Sophocles' play and mentioned incidentally in Euripides' *Orestes*,[103] but this does not mean that she was unavailable to Euripides when he wrote *Electra*, whose entire plot insists on Electra's isolation far from the city. Euripides does allude more overtly to *Choephori* than to Sophocles' *Electra*, but the first was an established classic and the other a contemporary work by a living playwright, and there is certainly no lack of possible allusions to Sophocles' play in Euripides'.

Dating Euripides' play before 413 (see next section) does not resolve the problem. It has been argued on stylistic grounds that Sophocles' *Electra* must have been produced not long before his *Philoctetes* (409 B.C.), so that a date for Euripides' play closer to 420 will put it first. But we know too little about the rate or the route of Sophocles' stylistic development to say that he must have written his *Electra* in his early eighties rather than (say) his mid-seventies.

Orestes and the matricide appear in three other extant plays of Euripides which vary in their treatment of the myth but can nevertheless usefully be compared with *Electra*. In *Andromache* Orestes is a secondary but crucial character, appearing in a single scene in order to abduct his cousin Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus once betrothed to him but now married to Achilles' son Neoptolemus. He also instigates the murder of Neoptolemus at Delphi with the connivance of Apollo. Several motifs are shared with *Electra* but differently nuanced: Orestes' furtive approach to his troubled kinswoman, his theft of the absent ruler's wife and plot against Neoptolemus (recalling Aegisthus's crimes), and the murder of Neoptolemus in the sanctuary (which resembles the killing of Aegisthus at the sacrifice in some respects, although Orestes does not participate in it directly). *Andromache* was produced a few years before *Electra* in the early years of the second Peloponnesian War; in it the dubious aspects of Orestes' and Apollo's behaviour which are treated ambivalently in *Electra* are given a thoroughly hostile portrayal.[104] After Orestes' scene

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[102] See Commentary, 15 n.

[103] This point was stressed by Owen 1936.147–8; cf. Ronnet 1970.

[104] In Athenian popular belief Orestes could be regarded as a violent and threatening ghost-figure, an aspect alluded to occasionally in tragedy (but not

with Hermione the Chorus recalls the matricide and Apollo's role in it with horror,[105] and at the end Thetis, the divine mother of Achilles, declares that the tomb of Neoptolemus at Delphi will for ever advertise Orestes' treachery.[106]

Iphigenia in Tauris, produced a few years after *Electra*, takes a different and more positive view. The plot, again largely invented by Euripides, provides an alternative conclusion to the story of Orestes' persecution by the Erinyes. Iphigenia has been miraculously rescued by Artemis from the sacrifice at Aulis and now lives as her priestess among the barbarous Taurians in the Crimea. Orestes has been tried at Athens but is still pursued by some of the Erinyes who have refused to accept the Athenian jury's verdict; now Apollo has sent him with the loyal Pylades to earn final absolution by stealing the statue of the Taurian Artemis and bringing it to Greece. Orestes almost becomes the victim of a human sacrifice supervised by his sister before they recognize each other and ingeniously contrive to escape with the statue. The premises of this plot are similar to those of *Electra*: the killing of Clytemnestra was a terrible mistake, imposed on Orestes by Apollo for reasons that in humane terms are unacceptable.[107] Orestes veers between trust in the god's guidance and despair of his concern up to the point when he has been reunited with Iphigenia and sees how their own perseverance, now at last aided by fortune and divine favour, may after all bring them safely home (*IT* 1007–16). The damage caused in the past by human ignorance and divine negligence cannot be undone but is balanced by the restoration of Iphigenia and the establishment of the cult of the Taurian Artemis in Attica.[108]

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noticeably in *Electra*): see Liapis 2006. Plato etymologizes his name as indicating his 'bestial, savage and mountain-dwelling (*oreinon*)' character (*Cratylus* 394e).

[105] 'A god it was, a god, whose oracular command turned upon her, when the son of Agamemnon travelled to Argos from the sanctuary and killed her, and was his mother's slayer. O god, O Phoebus, how do I believe it?' (*Andr.* 1031–6, transl. Lloyd 1994).

[106] *Andr.* 1239–42. On *Andromache* in general see Lloyd 1995/2005, Allan 2000 (with pp. 108–12 on Orestes).

[107] The clearest statement comes from Iphigenia herself when she learns that Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon ('O lamentable — she who killed *and* he who died!', *IT* 553), and that Orestes killed her in revenge for this ('Ah! How well did he perform a righteous wrong!', *IT* 559).

[108] On all this see further Cropp 1995.36–40.

Euripides re-imagined the aftermath of the matricide once more in one of his latest plays, *Orestes* (408 B.C.). The play is set in Argos a few days after the murders. Menelaus and Helen have arrived home from Egypt, and Orestes awaits trial before the people of Argos. Racked by conscience he suffers fits of madness in which he feels the assaults of the Erinyes (*Or.* 395ff.). At his trial Orestes argues that, besides obeying Apollo, he was obliged to avenge his father by killing his mother and benefited his fellow men by deterring husband-killing in the future; but the majority of the Argive assembly rejects his defence and condemns both him and Electra to death by suicide. At this point things get really out of hand: Pylades persuades the couple to punish Menelaus for his failure to support them by killing Helen, and Electra adds that they should save themselves by taking Hermione, daughter of Menelaus and Helen, hostage. Helen is duly attacked but vanishes (like Iphigenia) as Orestes strikes the death-blow, and the action reaches a crisis as Orestes confronts Menelaus, holding a knife to Hermione's throat and threatening to burn their ancestral home to the ground. Finally Apollo intervenes, revealing that Helen has been deified and ordering Orestes to spend a year in exile in Arcadia before facing a further trial at Athens where a jury of gods will acquit him.[109] He will then marry Hermione and rule happily in Argos,[110] while Electra will live happily with Pylades. Thus Apollo will at last end the difficulties he has caused by compelling Orestes to kill his mother (*Or.* 1664f.).

As with *Electra*, this unexpected conclusion has persuaded many modern readers to discount it as irrelevant, or as intentionally contradicting the real sense of the play, which is to be found in the corrupt and sociopathic character of a young man who would undertake to kill his own mother in pursuit of a family vendetta. Yet for much of the play Orestes is portrayed sympathetically as a callow youth who was induced to commit a horrific crime in the service of Apollo and now suffers remorse for what he he has done.[111] He turns to violence (again prompted

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[109] Cf. the Commentary below on *El.* 1258–63.

[110] In this account Neoptolemus will be killed at Delphi before he can marry Hermione (*Or.* 1654–7), and Orestes is presumably not implicated in his death.

[111] See especially *Or.* 28–31 (Electra), 160–5, 327–31, 819–43 (the Chorus), 284–93, 591–602 (Orestes), and 1665 (Apollo himself). Orestes now feels that even his father would have begged him not to kill his mother (288–92).

by Pylades and Electra)[112] in desperation at the predicament to which his crime has brought him. The violence spirals out of control, and he finds himself enacting a further episode in the self-destruction of the House of Tantalus (symbolized by his preparing to set fire to the palace) until Apollo intervenes to restore order and returns events to their proper course. The play, then, puts the matricide, Apollo's responsibility, and Orestes' character in much the same light as both *Electra* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* while pursuing their implications to a new and spectacular level.[113]

THE DATE OF THE PLAY

The play almost certainly belongs in the decade 422–413. The year 413 was once generally accepted in view of two points in the final scene.[114] Lines 1280–3 about the phantom Helen were seen as an 'advance notice' of the production of *Helen* in 412, and lines 1347–8, referring to shipping in the Sicilian sea, as an allusion to the Athenian expedition to Sicily, or specifically to Demosthenes' relief expedition which set out in Spring 413. In addition, lines 1350–6, warning of the perils of ships carrying polluted or perjured men, were thought by some to allude to the scandal caused by the desecration of the Herms and profanation of the Mysteries at Athens, in which Alcibiades was implicated, before the departure of the first force against Syracuse in 415. Zuntz, focusing on the first two points, argued forcefully that direct allusions to contemporary events or situations are alien to Greek tragedy, and that the passages in question make perfectly good sense in terms of their dramatic context alone.[115] Even if

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[112] Electra too is portrayed as regretting the matricide, but her part in driving Orestes to it (as in *Electra*) is not overlooked: cf. *Or.* 32, 615–21.

[113] This view of *Orestes* is put succinctly by West 1987.32–7, and in detail by Porter 1994.68–97 (with review of modern interpretations of *Orestes*, pp. 1–44). See also Porter 2003.

[114] History of the question: Donzelli 1978.27–71.

[115] Zuntz 1963.58–71, esp. 64–8. It should be stressed that Zuntz only ruled out allusions which could only be understood as referring to matters outside the drama, not cases where the mythical events of the drama could be seen to have a bearing on the dramatist's own world. For replies to Zuntz see especially Vögler 1967.52–62, Leimbach 1972, both accepting his argument concerning lines 1280–3 but insisting that lines 1347–8 must refer to the Sicilian expedition.

Zuntz's principle is not fully accepted, the case for identifying allusions in these places is far from compelling.[116]

As Zuntz also stressed, two metrical features suggest an earlier date.[117] First, resolutions in the spoken parts of *Electra* are significantly less frequent and (just as importantly) less varied in their rhythmic effects than in *Helen* (412), *Ion* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* (both probably close to *Helen*), or *Phoenician Women* (c. 409). In these respects *Electra* is a little less advanced than *Trojan Women* (415) and *Heracles* (c. 417?), and a little more so than *Andromache*, *Hecuba* and *Suppliant Women* (probably all from the later 420s); statistical analysis of the frequencies suggests a date for *Electra* between 422 and 417, with 420 or 419 statistically the most likely.[118] Secondly, trochaic tetrameters occur in none of Euripides' earlier plays but in all of *Heracles*, *Trojan Women* and the later plays (though only *Ion*, *Orestes* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* have more than one extensive passage). Their absence from *Electra*, when combined with the resolution characteristics, tends to favour an earlier date.

Circumstantial arguments for an earlier dating are not strong. Newiger (1961) suggested that Aristophanes in *Clouds* 534–6 alludes to the recognition scenes of *Electra* and *Choephori*, so that *Electra* must have been produced before 417, the bottom date for the revised version of *Clouds*; but these lines may well refer to the story rather than the plays.[119]

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[116] See Commentary on 1280–1, 1347–8, 1350–6.

[117] Many other 'internal' criteria (stylistic, linguistic, compositional) have been proposed: see Donzelli 1978.45–69, who finds nothing decisive in favour of a date after 415. The general simplicity and strophic structure of the lyrics in *Electra* lend some weight to an earlier dating (Donzelli 45–7). Those maintaining the later date have observed 'archaizing' features with remarkable frequency. Comparisons with the post-415 'recognition and intrigue' plays (pp. 12–13 above) are inconclusive, given that the rather similar *Cresphontes* was produced in the 420s.

[118] 'Resolution' is the substitution of two short syllables for a single long or *anceps* syllable. See Cropp–Fick 1985.14–23 on frequencies (*Electra*, p. 23), and 60–1 on the variety of word-shapes accommodated by resolution (the essentials are well explained by Dale 1967.xxiv–xxviii). Devine and Stephens 1981.47–55, using slightly different assumptions and an approximative method, give a range of 424–410 and a likeliest date of 417 (see Cropp–Fick 24 n. 17). The arguments of Vögler 1967.61 n. 26 and Leimbach 1972.191 n. 5 concerning the statistics are unsound.

[119] *Clouds* 534–6: 'So now this comedy, like that Electra, has come to see if it can find spectators as clever [as those who welcomed Aristophanes' earlier plays]. For she will recognize her brother's lock if indeed she sees it'. 'That Electra' means

Burkert (1990) argues that the play's positive references to the Dioscuri and its final exculpation of Helen serve to contrast a happy Sparta (their traditional home) with a tragic Argos and so indicate a production in the brief period when Athens was allied with Sparta against Argos after the Peace of Nicias, i.e. at the Dionysia of 420. Klimek-Winter's dating of *Electra* in 417 rests on the dubious assumptions that Euripides and other tragedians never produced at the Dionysia in successive years and that all tragedies which open at daybreak must have come first in their trilogies.[120] None of these points is compelling, but it is worth noting that seventeen other tragedies of Euripides are usually assigned to the last ten years of his life,[121] and five more should perhaps be added,[122] to say nothing of satyr-plays. There must have been some limit to this remarkable productivity.

On balance, then, the metrical features pointing to the period 422–417 seem to provide the best, though not conclusive, evidence for the date of the play.

GREEK TEXT AND CRITICAL APPARATUS

The text of *Electra*, and of the eight other 'alphabetic' plays of Euripides,[123] has survived through a single manuscript of the early 14th century now in Florence (**L** in the list below). Its copyist included a few

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'the renowned Electra': cf. 'that Thales', *Clouds* 180; LSJ 'ἐκεῖνος' I.2. Newiger also maintained that the supposed allusion to *Choephori* points to a recent revival of that play in the Athenian theatre: for this debate see e.g. Bain 1977, Donzelli 1980.115f., Michelini 1987.203, Davies 1998.92f.

[120] Klimek-Winter 1996. On the daybreak question see e.g. Ashby 1992, Porter 2009.336 n. 3.

[121] *Alexandros, Palamedes, Trojan Women* (all 415), *Andromeda, Helen* (both 412), *Archelaus* (after 413), *Hypsipyle, Phoenician Women, Antiope* (all 411–407), *Orestes* (408), *Iphigenia at Aulis, Bacchae, Alcmeon at Corinth* (all produced after Euripides' death), and mainly on metrical grounds *Iphigenia in Tauris, Ion, Auge, Polyidus*.

[122] *Temenus* and *Temenidae* if these formed a trilogy with *Archelaus*; *Antigone, Meleager* and *Oedipus* on metrical grounds.

[123] 'Alphabetic' because their Greek titles all begin with the letters E, H, I or K: in English *Helen, Electra, Heracles, Children of Heracles, Suppliant Women, Ion, Iphigenia at Aulis, Iphigenia in Tauris, Cyclops*. These texts were probably part of a 'complete works of Euripides' collected in alphabetical order.

variant readings and explanatory comments in the margins of the manuscript. Many other marginal notes and alterations of the text were added by the Byzantine scholar Demetrius Triclinius (**Tr**) for whom the copy was made. Another early 14th century manuscript (**P**), part of which including *Electra* is now in the Medicean Library in Florence and part in the Vatican Library in Rome, was probably copied directly from **L** so far as the alphabetic plays are concerned. **P** thus has no independent value except that it often gives **L**'s readings where these are unclear in **L** itself (especially where Triclinius altered **L** after **P** was copied from it). Later copies ('apographs') of L as altered by Triclinius also have no independent value but occasionally offer a useful correction (see the list below and critical apparatus for lines 977 and 985).[124]

Other evidence for the text includes:

(a) three ancient papyrus fragments and one pottery fragment (there are no papyrus fragments from ancient editions of the play itself):

P. Oxy. 420, 3rd C. A.D., from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, giving part of a hypothesis or plot summary covering lines 357 to 581: see text, translation and commentary below.

P. Hibeh 7, 3rd C. B.C., from Hibeh in Egypt, from an anthology of moral sayings including parts of lines 367–9.

P. Herc. 1081 fr. 16, 1st C. A.D., from the 'Villa of the Papyri' at Herculaneum in southern Italy, from a treatise on poetry by the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus, including a quotation of line 494 (Philodemus, *On Poems Book 1*, fr. 212.21–2 Janko).

O. Berlin inv. 12319, 3rd C. A.D., an *ostrakon* (pottery sherd) on which lines 388b–9 and several other items were written, perhaps as an exercise by a Greek-Egyptian schoolboy.

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[124] **L** and **P** are fully described by Turyn 1957.222–64; see also Zuntz 1965.126–40. Facsimiles of their Euripidean sections (Spranger 1920, 1939–46) are available in some major university libraries including Cambridge, London and Oxford. Images of the entire codex Laur. plut. 32.2 can now be seen on the website of the Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana (bmlonline.it). For **P**'s dependence on **L** see especially Zuntz (above) and (with detailed reference to *Electra*) Donzelli 1989. Donzelli also discusses the later apographs of **L** and early printed editions from Victorius (Pier Vettori, 1545) to Barnes (1694). For Triclinius's work on the lyrics of *Electra* see Donzelli 1994. Zuntz's view has been questioned recently by Magnani 2000 (with reference to *Heracleidae*) and Distilo 2012.iii–xlvi (with reference to *Electra*), both reasserting the view that P is descended separately from **L**'s exemplar (**A**). The issue makes little difference to the constitution of the text of *Electra*.

(b) Testimonia, i.e. quotations, paraphrases or extracts found in the texts of other authors or collections. The massive anthology of Joannes **Stobaeus** (5th C. A.D.) includes lines 37–8, 80–1, 294–6, 369–70, 376, 383–90, 426–31, 550–1, 943–4, 953–6, 1097–9, 1131. The much briefer anthology of **Orion** (also 5th C. A.D.) has lines 367–70 and 953–6. Other authors quoting from *Electra* are the comic playwright **Aristophanes**, who probably saw the first production of *Electra* (lines 1317–8), and several writing between the late first and early third centuries A.D.: the stylistic critic known as **Longinus** (line 379), the moralist **Plutarch** (167–8, 428–9a), the orator **Dio Chrysostom** (233–6, and allusions to 426–31), the medical writer **Galen** (125), and the philosophical writers **Diogenes Laertius** (379 again) and **Sextus Empiricus** (944).

Detailed references to all of these are included in the critical apparatus printed below the Greek text. The value of the testimonia varies greatly. Mistakes can easily occur in passages transmitted out of context, and some quotations were not even meant to be exact. On the other hand, some variants are obviously right or worth considering. My critical apparatus records such instances, but does not systematically describe the divergences between **L** and the other sources.

The apparatus generally omits matters of orthography, word-division, accentuation and punctuation, and obvious corrections of obvious minor errors. Conjectures are mentioned sparingly. Its main purpose is to indicate substantial departures from the transmitted text and continuing uncertainties.

The following symbols and abbreviations are used in this edition.

In the text:

[ ]	words in **L** judged inauthentic
⟨ ⟩	words or speaker-attributions omitted in **L**
† †	words in **L** judged corrupt but not successfully corrected

In the critical apparatus:

L	ms. Laurentianus plut. 32.2, ff. 192^{r}–200^{v} (c. 1315 A.D.)
$\mathbf{L}^{ac}$	**L** before correction (*ante correctionem*)
$\mathbf{L}^{pc}$	**L** after correction (*post correctionem*) by the original copyist
$\mathbf{L}^{\gamma p}$	variant recorded in **L** by the original copyist (γρ = γράφεται)
$\mathbf{L}^{mg}$	marginal comment or correction in **L** by the original copyist
$\mathbf{L}^{sl}$	insertion in **L** above the line (*supra lineam*) by the original copyist

L$^{?}$	**L** read uncertainly
*	letter erased in L
<L>	original reading of **L** inferred from **P**
<L$^{?}$>	original reading of **L** inferred uncertainly from **P**
Tr	correction made in **L** by Demetrius Triclinius
P	ms. Laurentianus conv. soppr. 172, ff. 28^{r}–40^{r} (c. 1320 A.D.)
P^{rubr}	addition by the rubricator (writer of headings etc.) of **P**
p	correction of **P** made in the late fifteenth century
Par. 2714	ms. Parisinus gr. 2714, ff. 12^{r}–23^{r}, a 16th C. copy of **L**
Par. 2888	ms. Parisinus gr. 2888, ff. 142^{r}–175^{v}, a 15th–16th C. copy of **L**
Ricc. 77	ms. Riccardianus 77, ff. 129^{r}–156^{r}, a 15th C. copy of **L** now in Florence
paragr.	dashes (*paragraphi*) indicating changes of speaker
om.	'omitted in'
del.	'deleted by' a modern scholar
susp.	'suspected by' a modern scholar

For detailed references for the scholars named in the critical apparatus see Donzelli 1995a.XI–XXV.

ELECTRA

⟨ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑΣ⟩

. . . . . (.) τοὺς ἄνδρας εἰσάγειν ἐ[-
κέλ[ε]υσεν πενιχρῶν μὲν ἀλλὰ [φι-
λοτίμων ξενίων μεθέξοντας, [αὐ-
τὸς δὲ τ[ὰ] πρόσφορα τῆ⟨ι⟩ σπουδῆ⟨ι⟩ κο[-
μιῶν ἀπῆλθεν· πυθόμενος δὲ τ[ὴν
χρείαν ὁ πρεσβύτης ὁ τὸν Ὀρέστη[ν
ὑ]πεκκλέψας ἦλθεν Ἠλέκτρα[ι
ξέν[ια] φέρων ἃ τοῖς κατ' ἀγρὸν μέ-
ν[ο]υσιν ἡ χώρα προῖκα δωρεῖται· θε-
ασάμενος δὲ τὸν Ὀρέστην καὶ χρο[-
νίους σημα]ντῆρας ἀνενέγκας
διεσά[φησε π]ρὸς τὴν Ἠλέκ[τραν
τ[ὴν ἀλήθεια]ν· ὁ δ' οὐκ ἐμέλ[λησε(ν)
. . . . . (.) ἀ]λλ' ὡμολόγησεν α[
(remains of eight more lines)

Hypothesis: P. Oxy. 420 (3rd c. A.D.), ed. B. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (1903), re-ed. Luppe (1981), Donzelli (1994) 1 τὴν μὲν Ἠ]λέκτραν? Barrett 2–3 φι]λοτίμων Barrett 5–6 τ[ὴν] χρείαν Luppe, Barrett 10–11 χρο[νίους Luppe

⟨SUMMARY OF *ELECTRA*⟩

. . . (So the peasant bade) Electra take the men inside to partake of poor but decent guest-fare, and he himself went off to bring the things needed for this undertaking. When he learned of the need, the old man who had stolen Orestes away came bringing Electra guest-fare such as the land gives bounteously to those who reside in the country; and after examining Orestes and recollecting some marks from long ago he explained the truth to Electra. And he [i.e. Orestes] did not delay . . . but acknowledged . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

Ὦ γῆς παλαιὸν †ἄργος†, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί,
ὅθεν ποτ' ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη
ἐς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρῳάδ' Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ·
κτείνας δὲ τὸν κρατοῦντ' ἐν Ἰδαίᾳ χθονὶ
Πρίαμον ἑλών τε Δαρδάνου κλεινὴν πόλιν
ἀφίκετ' ἐς τόδ' Ἄργος, ὑψηλῶν δ' ἐπὶ
ναῶν ἔθηκε σκῦλα πλεῖστα βαρβάρων.
κἀκεῖ μὲν ηὐτύχησεν· ἐν δὲ δώμασιν
θνήσκει γυναικὸς πρὸς Κλυταιμήστρας δόλῳ
καὶ τοῦ Θυέστου παιδὸς Αἰγίσθου χερί.
χὠ μὲν παλαιὰ σκῆπτρα Ταντάλου λιπὼν
ὅλωλεν, Αἴγισθος δὲ βασιλεύει χθονός,
ἄλοχον ἐκείνου Τυνδαρίδα κόρην ἔχων.
οὗς δ' ἐν δόμοισιν ἔλιφ' ὅτ' ἐς Τροίαν ἔπλει,
ἄρσενά τ' Ὀρέστην θῆλύ τ' Ἠλέκτρας θάλος,
τὸν μὲν πατρὸς γεραιὸς ἐκκλέπτει τροφεὺς
μέλλοντ' Ὀρέστην χερὸς ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου θανεῖν,
Στροφίῳ τ' ἔδωκε Φωκέων ἐς γῆν τρέφειν·
ἡ δ' ἐν δόμοις ἔμεινεν Ἠλέκτρα πατρός,
ταύτην ἐπειδὴ θαλερὸς εἶχ' ἥβης χρόνος
μνηστῆρες ᾔτουν Ἑλλάδος πρῶτοι χθονός.
δείσας δὲ μή τῳ παῖδ' ἀριστέων τέκοι
Ἀγαμέμνονος ποινάτορ', εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις
Αἴγισθος οὐδ' ἥρμοζε νυμφίῳ τινί.
ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦτ' ἦν φόβου πολλοῦ πλέων,
μή τῳ λαθραίως τέκνα γενναίῳ τέκοι,
κτανεῖν σφε βουλεύσαντος ὠμόφρων ὅμως

1 Ἄργος Victorius παλαιᾶς (or –ὸς) ἀρδμός Herwerden 4 Ἰδαίᾳ Elmsley Ἰλιάδι L 22–3 παῖδ' ἀριστέων...ποινάτορ' Porson παῖδας ἀργείων... ποινάτορας L 7 ἔθηκε Elmsley τέθεικε L τέθηκε Kamerbeek 27 σφε βουλεύσαντος ὠμόφρων Seidler, Elmsley σφ' ἐβουλεύσαντ**'*μόφρων δ' L^{ac} –σαντ* ὠμόφρων δ' L^{pc} –σαντ'. ὠμόφρων δ' TrP

ELECTRA

Early morning twilight. A peasant emerges through the door of his upland cottage (the stage-building) and surveys the plain of Argos.

PEASANT

O ancient †*plain?*† of this land, Inachus' streams, from which lord Agamemnon once launched Ares' power in a thousand ships and sailed to the land of Troy. He killed the ruler of the Idaean land, Priam, and captured Dardanus' glorious city.[5] Then he returned to Argos here and on its lofty temples placed countless spoils from the barbarians. At Troy he found success, but in his home he was killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, with her guile and the violence of Thyestes' son, Aegisthus.[10] And so, relinquishing Tantalus' ancient sceptre, he is gone, and now Aegisthus rules the land and possesses his wife, the daughter of Tyndareus.

As for those he left in his house when he sailed to Troy, the male Orestes and the female scion Electra,[15] the one, Orestes, was stolen away by his father's old tutor as he was about to die at Aegisthus' hand, and given to Strophius in the land of Phocis to raise. The other, Electra, stayed in her father's house, and when the burgeoning season of youth was upon her,[20] suitors from Greece's first families sought her hand. But Aegisthus feared she might bear to one of these nobles a son to avenge Agamemnon, so he kept her at home and would not wed her to any bridegroom. Even this situation, though, was fraught with fear[25] that she might bear children secretly to some well-born man; so he planned to kill her; but her mother, cruel though she

μήτηρ νιν ἐξέσωσεν Αἰγίσθου χερός.
ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ' ὀλωλότα,
παίδων δ' ἔδεισε μὴ φθονηθείη φόνῳ.
ἐκ τῶνδε δὴ τοιόνδ' ἐμηχανήσατο
Αἴγισθος· ὃς μὲν γῆς ἀπηλλάχθη φυγὰς
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, χρυσὸν εἶφ' ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ,
ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ δίδωσιν Ἠλέκτραν ἔχειν
δάμαρτα, πατέρων μὲν Μυκηναίων ἄπο
γεγῶσιν — οὐ δὴ τοῦτό γ' ἐξελέγχομαι·
λαμπροὶ γὰρ ἐς γένος γε, χρημάτων δὲ δὴ
πένητες, ἔνθεν ηὐγένει' ἀπόλλυται —
ὡς ἀσθενεῖ δοὺς ἀσθενῆ λάβοι φόβον.
εἰ γάρ νιν ἔσχεν ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἀνήρ,
εὔδοντ' ἂν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
φόνον δίκη τ' ἂν ἦλθεν Αἰγίσθῳ τότε.
ἦν οὔποθ' ἀνὴρ ὅδε, σύνοιδέ μοι Κύπρις,
ᾗσχυνεν εὐνῇ, παρθένος δ' ἔτ' ἐστὶ δή.
αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ ὀλβίων ἀνδρῶν τέκνα
λαβὼν ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατάξιος γεγώς,
στένω δὲ τὸν λόγοισι κηδεύοντ' ἐμοὶ
ἄθλιον Ὀρέστην, εἴ ποτ' εἰς Ἄργος μολὼν
γάμους ἀδελφῆς δυστυχεῖς ἐσόψεται.
ὅστις δέ μ' εἶναί φησι μῶρον, εἰ λαβὼν
νέαν ἐς οἴκους παρθένον μὴ θιγγάνω,
γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόσιν ἀναμετρούμενος
τὸ σῶφρον ἴστω καὐτὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὤν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ νὺξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρων τροφέ,
ἐν ᾗ τόδ' ἄγγος τῷδ' ἐφεδρεῦον κάρᾳ
φέρουσα πηγὰς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι —
οὐ δή τι χρείας ἐς τοσόνδ' ἀφιγμένη,
ἀλλ' ὡς ὕβριν δείξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς —

37–8 cited without lemma in Stobaeus 4.33.5 42 ποτέ Reiske (and P^{ac}?) 44 ᾗσχυνεν εὐνῇ TrP ᾗσχυνεν εὐνὴ* (–ὴν?) L ἤσχυν' ἐν εὐνῇ L^{yp} ἧς...ᾗσχυνεν εὐνήν Kvičala
57–8 punctuation: Radermacher

was, rescued her from Aegisthus' violence. For her husband's death, you see, she had a pretext; but the children's slaying she feared might rouse resentment.[30]

Aegisthus therefore devised the following scheme. For Agamemnon's son, who had left the land as a fugitive, he now promised gold to any man who killed him. And Electra he gave to me to take as my wife — me, who am sprung from Mycenaean stock[35] (in that respect I'm faultless; I'm distinguished in family but poor in possessions, which is the ruin of nobility) — so by giving her to a weak man he'd get a weak fear in return. For if a man of standing had taken her,[40] he would have roused Agamemnon's murder from its sleep, and justice would have come to Aegisthus at that time.

Now I have never, as Cypris is my witness, shamed Electra in bed; she is still in fact a virgin. For I am ashamed to take and abuse the children of wealthy men,[45] when I am not their equal; and I mourn for my so-called kinsman, wretched Orestes, if he ever comes to Argos and gets a sight of his sister's luckless marriage. And if anyone calls me a fool if I take[50] a young maiden into my home and do not touch her, he should realize he's using poor measures of judgment to size up decent behaviour, and is a fool himself.

Electra comes out of the cottage carrying a pitcher on her head. She addresses the sky, overlooking the Peasant at first:

ELECTRA

O dark Night, nurse of the golden stars, in which I bear this pitcher sitting here on my head[55] as I go for water from the stream — not that I've come to such a degree of need, but to display Aegisthus' hybris to the gods — and send laments for

γόους τ' ἀφίημ' αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί.
ἡ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή,
ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει,
τεκοῦσα δ' ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα
πάρεργ' Ὀρέστην κἀμὲ ποιεῖται δόμων.
Αυ. τί γὰρ τάδ', ὦ δύστην', ἐμὴν μοχθεῖς χάριν
πόνους ἔχουσα, πρόσθεν εὖ τεθραμμένη,
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ λέγοντος οὐκ ἀφίστασαι;
Ηλ. ἐγώ σ' ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἡγοῦμαι φίλον·
ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνύβρισας κακοῖς.
μεγάλη δὲ θνητοῖς μοῖρα συμφορᾶς κακῆς
ἰατρὸν εὑρεῖν, ὡς ἐγὼ σὲ λαμβάνω.
δεῖ δή με κἀκέλευστον εἰς ὅσον σθένω
μόχθου 'πικουφίζουσαν, ὡς ῥᾷον φέρῃς,
συνεκκομίζειν σοι πόνους. ἄλις δ' ἔχεις
τἄξωθεν ἔργα, τἀν δόμοις δ' ἡμᾶς χρεὼν
ἐξευτρεπίζειν. εἰσιόντι δ' ἐργάτῃ
θύραθεν ἡδὺ τἄνδον εὐρίσκειν καλῶς.
Αυ. εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σοι, στεῖχε· καὶ γὰρ οὐ πρόσω
πηγαὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἅμ' ἡμέρᾳ
βοῦς εἰς ἀρούρας ἐσβαλὼν σπερῶ γύας.
ἀργὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνὰ στόμα
βίον δύναιτ' ἂν ξυλλέγειν ἄνευ πόνου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Πυλάδη, σὲ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
πιστὸν νομίζω καὶ φίλον ξένον τ' ἐμοί·
μόνος δ' Ὀρέστην τόνδ' ἐθαύμαζες φίλων
πράσσονθ' ἃ πράσσω, δείν' ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου παθών,
ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα χἠ πανώλεθρος
μήτηρ. ἀφῖγμαι δ' ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων
Ἀργεῖον οὖδας οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος,
φόνον φονεῦσι πατρὸς ἀλλάξων ἐμοῦ.
νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε πρὸς τάφον μολὼν πατρὸς

59 ἀφίημ' Reiske –ίην L –είην Portus 80–1 cited without lemma in Stobaeus 3.30.12

my father into the broad heaven. For the baneful daughter of Tyndareus, my mother,[60] has thrown me out of our home to please her husband, and bearing other children with Aegisthus she robs Orestes and me of our place in the house.

Peasant. Why, unhappy woman, do you labour at these tasks for my sake, taking on drudgery when you were finely raised before,[65] and do not refrain from them though I tell you to?

Electra. I consider you equal to the gods for your friendship to me. You have not abused me in my distress. It's a great boon for mortals to find a healer of an evil plight, as I find you.[70] Even without your bidding, then, I ought, so far as I can, to lighten your toil so you may more easily bear it, and share with you in performing your labours. You have enough with the outdoor tasks; my job is to keep things in the house in order. It's nice for a worker coming in from outdoors[75] to find things properly organized within.

Peasant. Well, if you think so, go on; in fact the spring is not far from this dwelling of ours. And I at daybreak will drive the oxen to the ploughland and sow the furrows. No one, you know, can just keep the gods on his lips in idleness[80] and collect a living without labour.

They exit together by eisodos A. Orestes and Pylades approach the cottage by eisodos B, in travellers' clothing and with a couple of servants carrying baggage.

ORESTES

Pylades, I count you first amongst all in loyalty, and as a friend and host to me. You alone of my friends have respected me while I fared as I fare, being dreadfully abused by Aegisthus,[85] who killed my father — he and my accursed mother. Now from the god's rites I've arrived on Argive soil, witnessed by no one, to pay back blood-shed to my father's killers. During the night

δάκρυά τ' ἔδωκα καὶ κόμης ἀπηρξάμην
πυρᾷ τ' ἐπέσφαξ' αἷμα μηλείου φόνου,
λαθὼν τυράννους οἳ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.
καὶ τειχέων μὲν ἐντὸς οὐ βαίνω πόδα,
δυοῖν δ' ἄμιλλαν ξυντιθεὶς ἀφικόμην
πρὸς τέρμονας γῆς τῆσδ', ἵν' ἐκβάλω πόδα
ἄλλην ἐπ' αἶαν εἴ μέ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν,
ζητῶν τ' ἀδελφήν — φασὶ γάρ νιν ἐν γάμοις
ζευχθεῖσαν οἰκεῖν οὐδὲ παρθένον μένειν —
ὡς συγγένωμαι καὶ φόνου συνεργάτιν
λαβὼν τά γ' εἴσω τειχέων σαφῶς μάθω.
νῦν οὖν — ἔω γὰρ λευκὸν ὄμμ' ἀναίρεται —
ἔξω τρίβου τοῦδ' ἴχνος ἀλλαξώμεθα.
ἦ γάρ τις ἀροτὴρ ἤ τις οἰκέτις γυνὴ
φανήσεται νῷν, ἥντιν' ἱστορήσομεν
εἰ τούσδε ναίει σύγγονος τόπους ἐμή.
ἀλλ' εἰσορῶ γὰρ τήνδε πρόσπολόν τινα
πηγαῖον ἄχθος ἐν κεκαρμένῳ κάρᾳ
φέρουσαν, ἐζώμεσθα κἀκπυθώμεθα
δούλης γυναικός, ἤν τι δεξώμεσθ' ἔπος
ἐφ' οἷσι, Πυλάδη, τήνδ' ἀφίγμεθα χθόνα.

Ηλ. σύντειν' — ὥρα — ποδὸς ὁρμάν· ὤ, [*στρ. α*
ἔμβα ἔμβα κατακλαίουσα.
ἰώ μοί μοι.
ἐγενόμαν Ἀγαμέμνονος
καί τέκεν με Κλυταιμήστρα
στυγνὰ Τυνδάρεω κόρα,
κικλήσκουσι δέ μ' ἀθλίαν
Ἠλέκτραν πολιῆται.
φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων
καὶ στυγερᾶς ζόας.

96 ἐμβάλω L^{rp} πόδα Dobree ποδὶ L 98 ζητῶν τ' Pierson ζητοῦντ' L 102 ἔω Kirchhoff ἕως L 107 πρόσπολόν Seidler προσπόλων L 112, 127 ᾠδᾷ Willink 115 Ἀγαμέμνονος Seidler Ἀγαμέμνονος κούρα L 116 καὶ τέκεν με Seidler (κἄτεκέν με Wilamowitz) καί μ' ἔτεκε L καί μ' ἔτικτε Hermann 120 ⟨τῶν⟩ σχετλίων Tr (cf. 135)

I've been to my father's tomb[90] and offered tears, devoted a lock of my hair, and on the altar shed a slain sheep's blood, evading the tyrants who now rule this land. I am not setting foot inside the city walls, but have come with two joint aims[95] to this land's borders: to escape to another region should anyone look at me and recognize me, and seeking my sister — for they say she's now married and no longer a virgin — so I may join with her and make her my accomplice in bloodshed,[100] and so learn clearly how things are within the walls.

So now, since the pale face of dawn is rising, let's switch our path away from this beaten track. Either some ploughman or some serving-woman will come into our sight, whom we can ask[105] if my sister lives in these parts.

(Electra comes into view in eisodos A, returning from the spring.)

But look, here comes a servant, her head close-cropped, carrying on it a burden of spring-water. Let's settle here, Pylades, and listen to this slave-woman in case we can catch some word[110] from her on the matters that bring us to this country.

Orestes and his party withdraw and lurk by the corner of the cottage while Electra sings:

Electra. Press on — this is the hour — your urgent step; O, *[Strophe 1*
go forward, forward, sorrowing.
O me, O me!
I am the daughter of Agamemnon,[115]
and Clytemnestra bore me,
Tyndareus' hateful child.
The people of my city
call me wretched Electra.
Alas, alas for my harsh toils[120]
and my hateful life.

ὦ πάτερ, σὺ δ' ἐν Ἅϊδα
κεῖσαι 'κ σᾶς ἁλόχου σφαγεὶς
Αἰγίσθου τ', Ἀγάμεμνον.

ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον, [*μεσῳδ. α*
ἄναγε πολύδακρυν ἀδονάν. 126

σύντειν' — ὥρα — ποδὸς ὁρμάν· ὤ, [*ἀντ. α*
ἔμβα ἔμβα κατακλαίουσα.
ἰώ μοί μοι.
τίνα πόλιν, τίνα δ' οἶκον, ὦ 130
τλᾶμον σύγγον' ἀλατεύεις,
οἰκτρὰν ἐν θαλάμοις λιπὼν
πατρῴοις ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς
ἀλγίσταισιν ἀδελφάν;
ἔλθοις δὲ πόνων ἐμοὶ 135
τᾷ μελέᾳ λυτήρ —
ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ — πατρί θ' αἱμάτων
αἰσχίστων ἐπίκουρος, Ἄρ-
γει κέλσας πόδ' ἀλάταν.

θὲς τόδε τεῦχος ἐμᾶς ἀπὸ κρατὸς ἐ- [*στρ. β*
λοῦσ', ἵνα πατρὶ γόους νυχίους 141
†ἐπορθ*βοάσω†
ἰαχοῦσ' Ἅϊδα μέλος 143a
σοί, πάτερ. 143b
κάτω γᾶς ἐνέπω γόους
οἷς ἀεὶ τὸ κατ' ἦμαρ 145

123 'κ σᾶς Kamerbeek σᾶς L σᾶς...σφαγαῖς Porson, Hermann 125–6 quoted without ascription by Galen 5.423 Kühn 127 see 112 above 131 σύγγον' ἀλατεύεις Hartung σύγγονε λατρεύεις L 135 δὲ Hermann (cf. 120) τῶνδε L 138 αἰσχίστων Seidler ἐχθίστων L 142 ἐπορθ*βοάσω L (ἐπορθυ– or ἐπορθρο– L^{pc} or Tr) ἐπορθοβοάσω p (ἐπορθ βοάσω P?) ἐπορθρεύσω Dindorf ἐπορθιάζω (with 159 ἰώ ἰώ μοι) F. W. Schmidt ὑπ' ὄρθρον βοάσω Willink 143a ἰαχοῦσ' Ἅϊδα μέλος Diggle (Ἅϊδα μέλος Reiske) ἰαχὰν ἀοιδὰν μέλος Ἅϊδα L 143b σοί, πάτερ Hartung πάτερ, σοί L 144 κάτω Seidler κατὰ L γό⟨ων θρήν⟩ους Willink (cf. 161b)

And you, my father, Agamemnon,
lie in Hades, slaughtered by your wife
and by Aegisthus.

Come, rouse the same lament,[125] *[Mesode 1*
raise up the pleasure of abundant tears.

Press on — this is the hour — your urgent step; O, *[Antistr. 1*
go forward, forward, sorrowing.
O me, O me!
What city, what household, O[130]
my suffering brother, are you wandering to,
leaving in your ancestral chambers
your sister, piteous in her
most grievous plight?
May you come, a liberator from hardships[135]
for me in my misery —
O Zeus, Zeus! — and for our father
an avenger of that most shameful bloodshed,
bringing your wandering steps to shore at Argos!

(A servant comes out of the cottage.)

Take this vessel from my head and set it down[140] *[Strophe 2*
so †*I may raise high?*† for my father
these nocturnal cries of lamentation,
crying out a song of Hades[143a]
for you, father.[143b]
Down through the earth I utter the laments
with which continually day by day[145]

λείβομαι, κατὰ μὲν φίλαν
ὄνυχι τεμνομένα δέραν
χέρα τε κρᾶτ' ἐπὶ κούριμον
τιθεμένα θανάτῳ σῷ —

ἔ ἔ, δρύπτε κάρα — [*μεσῳδ. β*
οἷα δέ τις κύκνος ἀχέτας 151
ποταμίοις παρὰ χεύμασιν
πατέρα φίλτατον καλεῖ,
ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων
ἕρκεσιν, ὡς σὲ τὸν ἄθλιον, 155
πάτερ, ἐγὼ κατακλαίομαι,

λουτρὰ πανύσταθ' ὑδρανάμενον χροΐ [*ἀντ. β*
κοίτᾳ ἐν οἰκτροτάτᾳ θανάτου.
†ἰώ μοί μοι†
πικρᾶς μὲν πελέκεως τομᾶς 160
σᾶς, πάτερ, 161a
πικρᾶς δ' ἐκ Τροΐας †ὅδου βουλᾶς†. 161b
οὐ μίτραισι γυνά σε
δέξατ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ στεφάνοις,
ξίφεσι δ' ἀμφιτόμοις λυγρὰν
Αἰγίσθου λώβαν θεμένα 165
δόλιον ἔσχεν ἀκοίταν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἀγαμέμνονος ὦ κόρα, ἦλυθον, Ἠλέκτρα, [*στρ.*
ποτὶ σὰν ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν.
ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν γαλακτοπότας ἀνὴρ
Μυκηναῖος οὐριβάτας· 170
ἀγγέλλει δ' ὅτι νῦν τριταί-
αν καρύσσουσιν θυσίαν

146 λείβομαι Herwerden, Wecklein διέπομαι L 148 ἐπὶ κούριμον Barnes ἀποκούριμον L 159 ἰώ μοι ⟨ἰώ⟩ μοι Seidler (cf. 142) 162 μίτραισι γυνά σε Seidler μίτραις σε γυνὰ L μίτραις σε γυνὰ ⟨σὰ⟩ Willink 167–8 quoted 'from the parodos of Euripides' *Electra*' in Plutarch, *Life of Lysander* 15.4 168 ἀγρότειραν Tr^{sl} Plut. ἀγροτέραν LP 169 ἔμολεν Heath ἔμολε L

I pine, slashing with nails
this throat of mine,
beating hand against shorn head
in sorrow at your death —

ah, ah, tear my head — [150] *[Mesode 2*
and as some moaning swan
by river's streams
calls to its dearest father,
who has perished in the guileful corded net,
so do I, father, mourn[155]
for you and your wretched fate,

washed with those final waters upon your flesh *[Antistr. 2*
in a most pitiable repose of death.
†*O me, me*†
for the bitter cut of the axe[160]
upon you, father,[161a]
and the bitter †*plan of your journey*† from Troy.[161b]
Not with ribbands did your wife
receive you, nor with wreaths,
but with a two-edged sword,
imposing on you Aegisthus' grim mutilation,[165]
she took a guileful husband.

The Chorus enters by eisodos A and sings:

CHORUS

O daughter of Agamemnon, Electra, I have come *[Strophe*
to this rustic dwelling of yours.
There came, there came a Mycenaean man,
milk-drinking, mountain-going.[170]
He reports the people of Argos
are proclaiming a sacrifice the third day from this,

Ἀργεῖοι, πᾶσαι δὲ παρ' Ἥ-
ραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικαὶ στείχειν.

Ηλ. οὐκ ἐπ' ἀγλαΐαις, φίλαι,
θυμὸν οὐδ' ἐπὶ χρυσέοις
ὅρμοις ἐκπεπόταμαι
τάλαιν', οὐδὲ στᾶσα χοροῖς
Ἀργείαις ἅμα νύμφαις
εἰλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν.
δάκρυσι νυχεύω, δακρύων δέ μοι μέλει
δειλαίᾳ τὸ κατ' ἦμαρ.
σκέψαι μου πιναρὰν κόμαν
καὶ τρύχη τάδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων,
εἰ πρέποντ' Ἀγαμέμνονος
κούρᾳ τᾷ βασιλείᾳ
τᾷ Τροίᾳ θ', ἃ 'μοῦ πατέρος
μέμναταί ποθ' ἁλοῦσα.

Χο. μεγάλα θεός· ἀλλ' ἴθι καὶ παρ' ἐμοῦ χρῆσαι [*ἀντ.*
πολύπηνα φάρεα δῦναι
χρύσεά τε χάρισιν προσθήματ' ἀγλαΐας.
δοκεῖς τοῖσι σοῖς δακρύοις
μὴ τιμῶσα θεοὺς κρατή-
σειν ἐχθρῶν; οὕτοι στοναχαῖς
ἀλλ' εὐχαῖσι θεοὺς σεβί-
ζουσ' ἕξεις εὐαμερίαν, ὦ παῖ.

Ηλ. οὐδεὶς θεῶν ἐνοπᾶς κλύει
τᾶς δυσδαίμονος, οὐ παλαι-
ῶν πατρὸς σφαγιασμῶν.
οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου
τοῦ τε ζῶντος ἀλάτα,
ὅς που γᾶν ἄλλαν κατέχει

178 χοροῖς Seidler –οὺς L οὐδ' ἱστᾶσα χοροὺς Reiske οὐδ' ἐνστᾶσα χοροῖς Diggle 181 νυχεύω Hermann χεύω L 186 εἰ πρέποντ' Reiske εἴ πέρ ποτ' L 187 κούρᾳ τᾷ Reiske κούρας τὰ LP (τᾶ Tr) 192 χάρισιν Seidler (–σι Musgrave) χάρισαι L

and all the maidens are preparing
to go in procession to Hera's shrine.

Electra. No fineries, my friends,[175]
no golden necklaces
can set my wretched heart in flight,
nor shall I take my place in choruses
and stamp my whirling foot
along with the brides of Argos.[180]
In tears I pass my nights, tears are my sorrowful
care day by day.
Look at my filthy hair,
this threadbare clothing of mine,[185]
and see if they are seemly
for Agamemnon's royal daughter,
and for Troy which does not forget
she once was conquered by my father.

Chorus. Great is the goddess; come now and borrow from me *[Antistr.*
close-woven robes to put on,[191]
and golden adornments to enhance the finery's charms.
Do you suppose that with your tears,
without giving honour to the gods, you'll overcome
your enemies? No, pay respect to the gods[195]
with prayers, not cries of anguish,
and you will have prosperity, my child.

Electra. None of the gods listens to my voice
ill-fated as I am, nor heeds my
father's slaughter long ago.[200]
Alas for him who perished,
and for him still living, a wanderer,
dwelling somewhere in another land,

μέλεος ἀλαίνων ποτὶ θῆσσαν ἑστίαν,
τοῦ κλεινοῦ πατρὸς ἐκφύς.
αὐτὰ δ' ἐν χερνῆσι δόμοις
ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
δωμάτων φυγὰς πατρίων
οὐρείας ἀν' ἐρίπνας.
μάτηρ δ' ἐν λέκτροις φονίοις
ἄλλῳ σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

Χο. πολλῶν κακῶν Ἕλλησιν αἰτίαν ἔχει
σῆς μητρὸς Ἑλένη σύγγονος δόμοις τε σοῖς.

Ηλ. οἴμοι· γυναῖκες, ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων.
ξένοι τινὲς παρ' οἶκον οἵδ' ἐφεστίους
εὐνὰς ἔχοντες ἐξανίστανται λόχου.
φυγῇ σὺ μὲν κατ' οἶμον, ἐς δόμους δ' ἐγὼ
φῶτας κακούργους ἐξαλύξωμεν ποδί.
Ορ. μέν', ὦ τάλαινα· μὴ τρέσῃς ἐμὴν χέρα.
Ηλ. ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον, προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν.
Ορ. ἄλλους κτάνοιμι μᾶλλον ἐχθίους σέθεν.
Ηλ. ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ' ὧν σε μὴ ψαύειν χρεών.
Ορ. οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτου θίγοιμ' ἂν ἐνδικώτερον.
Ηλ. καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχᾷς ἐμοῖς;
Ορ. μείνασ' ἄκουσον, καὶ τάχ' οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς.
Ηλ. ἔστηκα· πάντως δ' εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσων γὰρ εἶ.
Ορ. ἧκω φέρων σοι σοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.
Ηλ. ὦ φίλτατ', ἆρα ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος;
Ορ. ζῇ· πρῶτα γάρ σοι τἀγάθ' ἀγγέλλειν θέλω.
Ηλ. εὐδαιμονοίης μισθὸν ἡδίστων λόγων.
Ορ. κοινῇ δίδωμι τοῦτο νῷν ἀμφοῖν ἔχειν.
Ηλ. ποῦ γῆς ὁ τλήμων τλήμονας φυγὰς ἔχων;
Ορ. οὐχ ἕνα νομίζων φθείρεται πόλεως νόμον.
Ηλ. οὔ που σπανίζων τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βίου;
Ορ. ἔχει μέν, ἀσθενὴς δὲ δὴ φεύγων ἀνήρ.

210 ἀν' Musgrave ναίουσ' L 233–6 quoted with allusion to the play by Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 13.5

roaming in misery to a hireling hearth,[205]
though born of that glorious father.
And as for me, I live in a labourer's house,
my soul wasting away,
an exile from my ancestral home,
up amongst mountain scarps,[210]
while our mother, sharing a bloodstained bed,
dwells with another man.

Chorus-leader. Many are the evils the Greeks can blame on your mother's sister, Helen, and your family too.

(Orestes and his companions come forward.)

Electra. O dear me, my laments are ended, women.[215] Some strangers here have been lurking at the altar by the house, and are rising up from their ambush. Let's flee, you down the track and me into the house, to escape these criminals.

(She makes for the door.)

Orestes (intervening).

Wait, foolish woman! Do not shrink from my hand![220]

Electra (turning to the image of Apollo near the door).

O Phoebus Apollo, I beseech you, let me not die!

Orestes (trying to turn her towards him).

I'd rather kill others more hated than yourself.

Elec. Get away; keep your hands off those you should not handle!

Ores. There's no one I could touch more rightfully.

Elec. Why then are you hiding here with a sword by my house?[225]

Ores. Stay and listen; then perhaps you'll accept what I say.

Elec. I'll stay, then; I'm yours anyway, as you're stronger than me.

Ores. I'm here to bring you words that come from your brother.

Elec. O dearest one! And is he alive or dead?

Ores. He lives; I'm happy to give you that good news first.[230]

Elec. May you prosper, in payment for those most welcome words!

Ores. I'll make that a gift for both of us to share.

Elec. Where in the world is he bearing his burden of exile?

Ores. He languishes wandering from city to city.

Elec. He's not, I hope, in want of daily sustenance?[235]

Ores. He has that, but a fugitive is powerless.

Ηλ. λόγον δὲ δὴ τίν' ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;
Ορ. εἰ ζῇς, ὅπως τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις.
Ηλ. οὔκουν ὁρᾷς μου πρῶτον ὡς ξηρὸν δέμας;
Ορ. λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν.
Ηλ. καὶ κρᾶτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῷ.
Ορ. δάκνει σ' ἀδελφὸς ὅ τε θανὼν ἴσως πατήρ.
Ηλ. οἴμοι· τί γάρ μοι τῶνδέ γ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον;
Ορ. φεῦ φεῦ· τί δ' αὖ σοῦ σῷ κασιγνήτῳ δοκεῖς;
Ηλ. ἀπὼν ἐκεῖνος, οὐ παρὼν ἡμῖν φίλος.
Ορ. ἐκ τοῦ δὲ ναίεις ἐνθάδ' ἄστεως ἑκάς;
Ηλ. ἐγημάμεσθ', ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.
Ορ. ὤμωξ' ἀδελφὸν σόν· Μυκηναίων τίνι;
Ηλ. οὐχ ᾧ πατήρ μ' ἤλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.
Ορ. εἴφ', ὡς ἀκούσας σῷ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω.
Ηλ. ἐν τοῖσδ' ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.
Ορ. σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.
Ηλ. πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἔμ' εὐσεβής.
Ορ. ἡ δ' εὐσέβεια τίς πρόσεστι σῷ πόσει;
Ηλ. οὐπώποτ' εὐνῆς τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν.
Ορ. ἄγνευμ' ἔχων τι θεῖον ἢ σ' ἀπαξιῶν;
Ηλ. γονέας ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ἐμοὺς οὐκ ἠξίου.
Ορ. καὶ πῶς γάμον τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἥσθη λαβών;
Ηλ. οὐ κύριον τὸν δόντα μ' ἡγεῖται, ξένε.
Ορ. ξυνῆκ'· Ὀρέστῃ μή ποτ' ἐκτείσῃ δίκην.
Ηλ. τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ταρβῶν· πρὸς δὲ καὶ σώφρων ἔφυ.
Ορ. φεῦ·
γενναῖον ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας, εὖ τε δραστέον.
Ηλ. εἰ δή ποθ' ἥξει γ' ἐς δόμους ὁ νῦν ἀπών.
Ορ. μήτηρ δέ σ' ἡ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ' ἠνέσχετο;
Ηλ. γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, ὦ ξέν', οὐ παίδων φίλαι.
Ορ. τίνος δέ σ' οὕνεχ' ὕβρισ' Αἴγισθος τάδε;
Ηλ. τεκεῖν μ' ἐβούλετ' ἀσθενῆ, τοιῷδε δούς.
Ορ. ὡς δῆθε παῖδας μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορας;
Ηλ. τοιαῦτ' ἐβούλευσ', ὧν ἐμοὶ δοίη δίκην.

238 ὅπως Elmsley ὅπου L 240 γε Heath τὲ L συντετηκός Reiske συντέτηκας L
244 δ' αὖ σοῦ Seidler δαὶ σὺ L 256 ἀπαξιῶν Schaefer ἀν- L

Elec. What word is it then that you have brought from him?
Ores. To ask if you live, and if living, in what condition.
Elec. Well, then, don't you see, first, how my body is withered?
Ores. Yes, wasted away with griefs, and that makes me groan.
Elec. And how my head and hair are razor-shorn?
Ores. You grieve for your brother and your dead father, I dare say.
Elec. Yes, alas, for what is dearer to me than these?
Ores. Ah, ah: and what dearer than you to your brother, do you think?
Elec. He's an absent friend to me, not a present one.
Ores. But why are you living here so far from the town?
Elec. I've fallen, stranger, into a fatal marriage.
Ores. I moan for your brother. With which of Mycenae's men?
Elec. Not one my father once hoped to give me to.
Ores. Speak plainly, so I may hear it and tell your brother.
Elec. This is his house; here I live, on these far borders.
Ores. Some labourer or oxherd fits the house.
Elec. He's a poor but noble man, and respectful to me.
Ores. What sort of respect does your husband show to you?
Elec. He has never yet presumed to touch my bed.
Ores. Keeping some religious abstinence, or disdaining you?
Elec. He did not think it right to insult my family.
Ores. And how was he not pleased to get such a marriage?
Elec. He considers the man who gave me had no right to, stranger.
Ores. I see — in case Orestes should punish him one day.
Elec. He does indeed fear that, but he's right-minded too.
Ores. Ah, you've described a noble man; we should treat him well.
Elec. Yes, if my absent brother ever comes home.
Ores. And the mother who bore you, did she put up with this?
Elec. Women are friends to their husbands, stranger, not their children.
Ores. And why did Aegisthus abuse you in this way?
Elec. He wanted me to bear weak children, giving me to such a man.
Ores. So that you could not bear sons to become avengers?
Elec. That was his plan, and may he pay me for it!

Ορ. οἶδεν δέ σ' οὖσαν παρθένον μητρὸς πόσις;
Ηλ. οὐκ οἶδε· σιγῇ τοῦθ' ὑφαιρούμεσθά νιν.
Ορ. αἵδ' οὖν φίλαι σοι τούσδ' ἀκούουσιν λόγους;
Ηλ. ὥστε στέγειν γε τἀμὰ καὶ σ' ἔπη καλῶς.
Ορ. τί δῆτ' Ὀρέστης πρὸς τάδ', Ἄργος ἦν μόλῃ;
Ηλ. ἥρου τόδ'; αἰσχρόν γ' εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή;
Ορ. ἐλθὼν δὲ δὴ πῶς φονέας ἂν κτάνοι πατρός;
Ηλ. τολμῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οἷ' ἐτολμήθη †πατήρ†.
Ορ. ἦ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ μητέρ' ἂν τλαίης κτανεῖν;
Ηλ. ταὐτῷ γε πελέκει τῷ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο.
Ορ. λέγω τάδ' αὐτῷ, καὶ βέβαια τἀπὸ σοῦ;
Ηλ. θάνοιμι μητρὸς αἷμ' ἐπισφάξασ' ἐμῆς.
Ορ. φεῦ·
εἴθ' ἦν Ὀρέστης πλησίον κλύων τάδε.
Ηλ. ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', οὐ γνοίην ἂν εἰσιδοῦσά νιν.
Ορ. νέα γάρ, οὐδὲν θαῦμ', ἀπεζεύχθης νέου.
Ηλ. εἷς ἂν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων.
Ορ. ἆρ' ὃν λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ἐκκλέψαι φόνου;
Ηλ. πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων.
Ορ. ὁ κατθανὼν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;
Ηλ. ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.
Ορ. οἴμοι, τόδ' οἷον εἶπας· αἴσθησις γὰρ οὖν
καὶ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς.
λέξον δ', ἵν' εἰδὼς σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω
λόγους ἀτερπεῖς ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλύειν.
ἔνεστι δ' οἶκτος ἀμαθίᾳ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδρῶν· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀζήμιον
γνώμην ἐνεῖναι τοῖς σοφοῖς λίαν σοφήν.
Χο. κἀγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδ' ἔρον ψυχῆς ἔχω.
πρόσω γὰρ ἄστεως οὖσα τἀν πόλει κακὰ
οὐκ οἶδα, νῦν δὲ βούλομαι κἀγὼ μαθεῖν.
Ηλ. λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή· χρὴ δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν
τύχας βαρείας τὰς ἐμὰς κἀμοῦ πατρός.

274 τάδ' Camper τόδ' L 277 ποτέ Nauck πατρός Broadhead πατρί Winnington-Ingram 291 καὶ Dobree κἀκ L 294–6 cited without lemma in Stobaeus 3.1.64 295 σοφοῖσι δ'...καὶ Stob. σοφοῖσιν...οὐ L 296 ἐνεῖναι Stob. μὲν εἶναι L

Ores. And does your mother's husband know you are still a virgin?[270]

Elec. He does not; we keep this from him through silence.

Ores. These women listening, then, are friendly to you?

Elec. Yes, so they'll keep what you and I say well hidden.

Ores. Then how should Orestes deal with this, if he comes to Argos?

Elec. You ask that? It's a shameful question! Isn't now the moment?[275]

Ores. Well, when he comes, how can he kill his father's murderers?

Elec. By daring such things as †*our father*† were dared by his enemies!

Ores. And would you dare with him to kill your mother as well?

Elec. Yes, with the very same axe that killed our father!

Ores. Shall I tell him this? Is it certain on your side?[280]

Elec. May I die once I've shed my mother's blood in vengeance!

Ores. Ah, if only Orestes were nearby hearing this!

Elec. But stranger, I would not know him if I set eyes on him.

Ores. No wonder; you were both young when you were separated.

Elec. There's only one of my friends who would recognize him.[285]

Ores. The one they say stole him away from slaughter?

Elec. Yes, our father's tutor, now a very old man.

Ores. And your father who died, does he have a decent tomb?

Elec. He got what he got. He was cast out from the house.

Ores. Alas, what a thing you've said! Awareness, you see,[290] even of others' troubles distresses people. Tell me about them, though, so I may know and take to your brother words that will bring him no joy, but that he must hear. Pity is nowhere found in ill-bred ignorance, but in discerning men; yet there's a downside too[295] for a discerning man in having a too discerning mind.

Chorus-leader. I too have the same desire in my soul as him. Out here far from town I know nothing of the city's ills, and now I too would like to learn about them.

Electra. I'm ready to tell you, if it's proper; and surely it's proper to tell to a friend[300] the heavy misfortunes of myself and my father.

ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἱκετεύω, ξένε,
ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστῃ τἀμὰ κἀκείνου κακά,
πρῶτον μὲν οἵοις ἐν πέπλοις αὐλίζομαι,
πίνῳ θ' ὅσῳ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε
οἵαισι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
αὐτὴ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους
[ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα καὶ στερήσομαι],
αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορουμένη,
ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη.
ἀναίνομαι γυναῖκας οὖσα παρθένος,
αἰσχύνομαι δὲ Κάστορ', ὃς πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς
ἐλθεῖν ἔμ' ἐμνήστευεν, οὖσαν ἐγγενῆ.
μήτηρ δ' ἐμὴ Φρυγίοισιν ἐν σκυλεύμασιν
θρόνῳ κάθηται, πρὸς δ' ἕδραισιν Ἀσίδες
δμωαὶ στατίζουσ', ἃς ἔπερσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ,
Ἰδαῖα φάρη χρυσέαις ἐζευγμέναι
πόρπαισιν. αἷμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
μέλαν σέσηπεν, ὃς δ' ἐκεῖνον ἔκτανεν
ἐς ταὐτὰ βαίνων ἅρματ' ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἐν οἷς Ἕλλησιν ἐστρατηλάτει
μιαιφόνοισι χερσὶ γαυροῦται λαβών.
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ τύμβος ἠτιμασμένος
οὔπω χοάς ποτ' οὐδὲ κλῶνα μυρσίνης
ἔλαβε, πυρὰ δὲ χέρσος ἀγλαϊσμάτων.
μέθῃ δὲ βρεχθεὶς τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις
ὁ κλεινός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐνθρῴσκει τάφῳ,
πέτροις τε λεύει μνῆμα λάϊνον πατρός,
καὶ τοῦτο τολμᾷ τοὔπος εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγειν·
'Ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης; ἆρά σοι τύμβῳ καλῶς
παρὼν ἀμύνει;' ταῦτ' ἀπὼν ὑβρίζεται.
ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἱκετεύω σ', ἀπάγγειλον τάδε.
πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἑρμηνεὺς δ' ἐγώ,

308 del. Camper lacuna following: Page 311–3 del. Steinberg 311 δὲ γυναῖκας Tr (δὲ del. Barnes) δὲ γυμνὰς L παρθένους Kirchhoff 312 αἰσχύνομαι Denniston ἀναίνομαι L 312–3 ὃς...ἔμ' ἐμνήστευεν Nauck ὦ (i.e. ᾧ)...ἐμὲ μνήστευον L ὡ...ἔμ' ἐμνήστευον Scaliger 315 ἕδραισιν Ἀσίδες Hermann ἕδρ** (–αις? –ας TrP) ἀσιήτιδες L 324 οὔπω χοάς ποτ' Porson, Elmsley οὐπώποτ' οὐ χοὰς L

And since you prompt my telling, I beseech you, stranger, report to Orestes these troubles that are mine and his as well. First, the kind of clothes I must lie in, the dirt I'm loaded with, the kind of shelter[305] I live in, exiled from those royal halls, working the shuttle to make clothes with my own labour [or else I shall have my body unclothed and be deprived], and carrying fresh water from the stream myself, missing festive rites, excluded from choruses.[310] I refuse women's company since I am a maiden, and feel shame before Castor who was wooing me, his kinswoman, before he went to join the gods. My mother meanwhile sits on a throne amid Phrygian spoils, and by her seat[315] stand Asian slave-women whom my father plundered, their Idaean robes fastened with golden brooches. And still my father's blood rots black in the palace, while the man who killed him steps into the same chariot as he did to go about,[320] and revels in taking in his bloodstained hands the sceptre with which my father commanded the Hellenes. The tomb of Agamemnon, left unhonoured, has never yet received libations nor a branch of myrtle; his altar is barren, devoid of offerings.[325] And my mother's husband, sodden with drink — this glorious man, they say, leaps on the grave and pelts with stones our father's stone memorial, and dares to utter this insult against us: 'Where is your son Orestes? Is he here and doing a fine job of defending your tomb for you?'[330] That's how Orestes is abused in his absence.

Come, stranger, I beseech you, take back this report to him. Many are sending it, I am their interpreter — my hands, my

αἱ χεῖρες, ἡ γλῶσσ', ἡ ταλαίπωρός τε φρὴν,
κάρα τ' ἐμὸν ξυρῆκες ὅ τ' ἐκεῖνον τεκών.
αἰσχρὸν γάρ, εἰ πατὴρ μὲν ἐξεῖλεν Φρύγας,
ὁ δ' ἄνδρ' ἕν' εἷς ὢν οὐ δυνήσεται κτανεῖν,
νέος πεφυκὼς κἀξ ἀμείνονος πατρός.

Χο. καὶ μὴν δέδορκα τόνδε, σὸν λέγω πόσιν,
λήξαντα μόχθου πρὸς δόμους ὁρμώμενον.

Αυ. ἔα· τίνας τούσδ' ἐν πύλαις ὁρῶ ξένους;
τίνος δ' ἕκατι τάσδ' ἐπ' ἀγραύλους πύλας
προσῆλθον; ἦ 'μοῦ δεόμενοι; γυναικί τοι
αἰσχρὸν μετ' ἀνδρῶν ἑστάναι νεανιῶν.
Ηλ. ὦ φίλτατ', εἰς ὕποπτα μὴ μόλῃς ἐμοί·
τὸν ὄντα δ' εἴσῃ μῦθον· οἵδε γὰρ ξένοι
ἥκουσ' Ὀρέστου πρὸς ἐμὲ κήρυκες λόγων.
ἀλλ', ὦ ξένοι, σύγγνωτε τοῖς εἰρημένοις.
Αυ. τί φασίν; ἀνὴρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος;
Ηλ. ἔστιν λόγῳ γοῦν, φασὶ δ' οὐκ ἄπιστ' ἐμοί.
Αυ. ἦ καί τι πατρὸς σῶν τε μέμνηται κακῶν;
Ηλ. ἐν ἐλπίσιν ταῦτ'· ἀσθενὴς φεύγων ἀνήρ.
Αυ. ἦλθον δ' Ὀρέστου τίνα πορεύοντες λόγον;
Ηλ. σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.
Αυ. οὔκουν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις;
Ηλ. ἴσασιν, οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἔχουσιν ἐνδεές.
Αυ. οὔκουν πάλαι χρῆν τοῖσδ' ἀνεπτύχθαι πύλας;
χωρεῖτ' ἐς οἴκους· ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων
ξενίων κυρήσεθ' οἷ' ἐμὸς κεύθει δόμος.
[αἴρεσθ', ὀπαδοί, τῶνδ' ἔσω τεύχη δόμων.]
καὶ μηδὲν ἀντείπητε, παρὰ φίλου φίλοι
μολόντες ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν,
οὔτοι τό γ' ἦθος δυσγενὲς παρέξομαι.
Ορ. πρὸς θεῶν, ὅδ' ἀνὴρ ὃς συνεκκλέπτει γάμους
τοὺς σούς, Ὀρέστην οὐ καταισχύνειν θέλων;

340 ὁρμώμενον Paley ὡρμημένον L 353 τίνα πορεύοντες Reiske τίν' ἀγορεύοντες L
360 del. Barrett 363 δυσγενὲς Canter δυσμενὲς L

tongue, my sorrowing mind, my razor-shorn head, and the father who begot him.[335] It's shameful if, after his father destroyed the Phrygians, he, one on one, will fail to kill his man, though he is young and born from a better father.

The Peasant appears in eisodos A, returning from the fields.

Chorus-leader. Look now, I've just noticed him here — your husband, I mean — heading for the house after finishing his work.[340]

Peasant (noticing the visitors).

Hold on; who are these strangers I see in the doorway? What has brought them to approach these rustic doors? Do they want something from me? For a woman, to be sure, it's shaming to stand amongst young men.

Elec. Dearest husband, don't start getting suspicious of me;[345] you'll soon know the real story. These strangers here have brought me word from Orestes. But, strangers, please forgive what has been said.

Peas. What do they say? The man is alive and sees the light?

Elec. He is, by their account, and I don't distrust it.[350]

Peas. And is he mindful at all of your father's troubles and yours?

Elec. That's a matter for hope. A man in exile is powerless.

Peas. And what word is it that they've brought from Orestes?

Elec. He has sent them as observers of my troubles.

Peas. So some they can see, and the rest I suppose you're telling them?

Elec. They know them; they're well aware of everything.[356]

Peas. Then shouldn't our doors have been opened to them long ago? *(To Orestes and Pylades)* Go into the house; in return for your valuable words you shall get such guest-fare as is stored in my house. [Lift the baggage, servants, into the house.][360] And don't say a word against it; you're friends coming from a friend. I may be poor, but I'll certainly not show my conduct to be ill-bred.

Orestes (to Electra)

By the gods, is this the man who shares with you the pretence of marriage. refusing to shame Orestes?[365]

Ηλ. οὗτος κέκληται πόσις ἐμὸς τῆς ἀθλίας.
Ορ. φεῦ·
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν·
ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ἄνδρα γενναίου πατρὸς
τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, χρηστὰ δ' ἐκ κακῶν τέκνα,
λιμόν τ' ἐν ἀνδρὸς πλουσίου φρονήματι,
γνώμην δὲ μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι.
πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;
πλούτῳ; πονηρῷ τἄρα χρήσεται κριτῇ.
ἢ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν; ἀλλ' ἔχει νόσον
πενία, διδάσκει δ' ἄνδρα τῇ χρείᾳ κακόν.
ἀλλ' εἰς ὅπλ' ἐλθών; τίς δὲ πρὸς λόγχην βλέπων
μάρτυς γένοιτ' ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;
κράτιστον εἰκῇ ταῦτ' ἐᾶν ἀφειμένα.
οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὔτ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας
οὔτ' αὖ δοκήσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος,
ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὤν, ἄριστος ηὑρέθη.
οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσεθ', οἳ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῇ δ' ὁμιλίᾳ βροτῶν
κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς;
οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τὰς πόλεις οἰκοῦσιν εὖ
καὶ δώμαθ'· αἱ δὲ σάρκες αἱ κεναὶ φρενῶν
ἀγάλματ' ἀγορᾶς εἰσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ δόρυ

367–79 cited and ascribed to Euripides in P. Hibeh 7.10–22; 367–70 cited and ascribed to *Electra* in Orion 8.7; 369–70 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.29.37 368–72 del. Reeve (371–2 Schenkl, 369–72 Vitelli) 370 δ' Stob., Orion τ' P. Hibeh, L 372 δὲ Seidler τε P. Hibeh, L 373–9 del. Wilamowitz 373 διαλαβὼν L διορίσας P. Hibeh 374 τἄρα P. Hibeh (conj. Seidler, Elmsley) γ' ἄρα L (γ' ἆρα Seidler, Denniston *GP* 49, 129) 376 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.32.31 377 ἐλθών Heath ἔλθω P. Hibeh, L 379 quoted and ascribed to Euripides (and perhaps to his *Auge*: see Commentary) by Diogenes Laertius 2.33; κράτιστον...ἐᾶν quoted without ascription by Longinus 44.12 383–90 cited and ascribed to Euripides in Stobaeus 2.15.13, to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.29.4 383–5 suspected by Murray 383 ἀφρονήσεθ' Badham φρονήσεθ' L, Stob. 2.15.13 φρονήσηθ' or φρονήσειθ' Stob. 4.29.4 384 βροτῶν Keene –οὺς L, Stob. 386–90 del. Wilamowitz 387 φρενῶν L, Stob. 2.15.13 βροτῶν Stob. 4.29.4 388–9 οὐδὲ...φέρει Berlin ostracon inv. 12319 (3rd c. B.C.) 388 δόρυ ostracon, Stob. δορὶ L

Elec. Yes, this man is called husband to me in my misery.

Orest. Well, nothing is precise when it comes to virtue! For there's confusion in the natures of men. Before now I've seen a worthless man sprung from a noble father, and estimable children from low-born parents;[370] emptiness I've seen in a rich man's thinking, and a great mind in a poor man's body. How then shall a man distinguish and rate them correctly? By wealth? A faulty guide he'll then be using! Or by lack of possessions? Yet poverty's unhealthy,[375] and trains a man in badness because of his need. Turning, then, to arms? Yet who when facing an enemy's spears can testify which man is the virtuous one? It's best to let these things go and leave them in disorder. For this man, who is not eminent amongst the Argives,[380] nor yet puffed up by family reputation, but belongs amongst the many, has been found excellent. Will you not cease your foolishness, you who stray about full of empty opinions, and use men's company and their conduct to distinguish the noble amongst them?[385] It's men of this kind who order cities properly, and homes as well, while fleshbags devoid of brains are nothing but ornaments of the town square. Even in battle a strong arm abides the spear no

μᾶλλον βραχίων σθεναρὸς ἀσθενοῦς μένει·
ἐν τῇ φύσει δὲ τοῦτο κἀν εὐψυχίᾳ.
ἀλλ' ἄξιος γὰρ ὅ τε παρὼν ὅ τ' οὐ παρὼν
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, οὗπερ οὕνεχ' ἥκομεν,
δεξώμεθ' οἴκων καταλύσεις. χωρεῖν χρεών,
δμῶες, δόμων τῶνδ' ἐντός. ὡς ἐμοὶ πένης
εἴη πρόθυμος πλουσίου μᾶλλον ξένος.
αἰνῶ μὲν οὖν τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐσδοχὰς δόμων,
ἐβουλόμην δ' ἂν εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς
ἐς εὐτυχοῦντας ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν δόμους.
ἴσως δ' ἂν ἔλθοι· Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῶ.

Χο. νῦν ἢ πάροιθε μᾶλλον, Ἠλέκτρα, χαρᾷ
θερμαινόμεσθα καρδίαν· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν
μόλις προβαίνουσ' ἡ τύχη σταίη καλῶς.
Ηλ. ὦ τλῆμον, εἰδὼς δωμάτων χρείαν σέθεν
τί τούσδ' ἐδέξω μείζονας σαυτοῦ ξένους;
Αυ. τί δ'; εἴπερ εἰσὶν ὡς δοκοῦσιν εὐγενεῖς,
οὐκ ἔν τε μικροῖς ἔν τε μὴ στέρξουσ' ὁμῶς;
Ηλ. ἐπεί νυν ἐξήμαρτες ἐν σμικροῖσιν ὤν,
ἔλθ' ὡς παλαιὸν τροφέ' ἐμοῦ φίλου πατρός,
ὃς ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν Τάναον Ἀργείας ὅρους
τέμνοντα γαίας Σπαρτιάτιδός τε γῆς
ποίμναις ὁμαρτεῖ πόλεος ἐκβεβλημένος·
κέλευε δ' †αὐτὸν τόνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένον†
ἐλθεῖν ξένιά τ' ἐς δαῖτα πορσῦναί τινα.
ἡσθήσεταί τοι καὶ προσεύξεται θεοῖς,
ζῶντ' εἰσακούσας παῖδ' ὃν ἐκσῴζει ποτέ.
οὐ γὰρ πατρῴων ἐκ δόμων μητρὸς πάρα

389 μένει L, Stob. φέρει ostracon 396–400 del. Reeve 401 πάροιθε Camper –θεν L μᾶλλον ἢ πάροιθεν Diggle 409 τροφέ' Elmsley τροφὸν L ἐμοῦ φίλου Victorius ἐμὸν φίλου L ἐμοῦ φίλον Camper τροφέα μοι φίλου Diggle (τροφὸν ἐμοὶ Kayser) 413 αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένος Musgrave ὡς τῶνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένων Kvičala (τῶνδ'... ἀφιγμένων Camper) αὐτὸν τῶνδε δεῦρ' ἀφιγμένων Heimsoeth (τῶνδ' ἀφιγμένων δόμους Weil) 414 ξένιά Weil ξένων L

more than a weak one; that depends on a man's nature and his courage.[390]

Well, then, since both of us merit it — he who is here and he who is not here, Agamemnon's son, in whose name we've come — let us accept the lodging of this house. You servants may proceed into the house. *(They obey.)* I'd rather have a poor but willing host than a wealthy one.[395] So I commend this man's receiving us in his house; and yet I could wish your brother, prospering, was taking me into a prospering house. Perhaps he'll come, though; Loxias' decrees are firm, though mortals' seer-craft I happily dismiss.[400]

Orestes and Pylades follow the servants inside, leaving Electra on stage with the Peasant.

Chorus-leader. Now more than before, Electra, we feel our hearts warming with joy; perhaps your fortune may struggle forward till it rests favourably.

Electra. You thoughtless man! You know the poverty of our home, so why have you received these guests who are greater men than you?[405]

Peasant. What's the matter? If they are well-bred as they seem, won't they be content amongst small and great alike?

Electra. Well then, since you've made this mistake and are one of the small, go to my dear father's former tutor, who lives by the Tanaus river that cuts the borders of Argive[410] and Spartan land, minding his flocks, cast out from the city. Tell †*this very man arrived at the house*† to come and provide some guest-fare for our dinner. He'll surely rejoice and pay homage to the gods[415] when he hears the child he once rescued is alive. We'd get nothing, of course, from our mother from our ancestral home —

λάβοιμεν ἄν τι· πικρὰ δ' ἀγγείλαιμεν ἄν,
εἰ ζῶντ' Ὀρέστην ἡ τάλαιν' αἴσθοιτ' ἔτι.
Αυ. ἀλλ', εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, τούσδ' ἀπαγγελῶ λόγους
γέροντι· χώρει δ' ἐς δόμους ὅσον τάχος
καὶ τἄνδον ἐξάρτυε. πολλά τοι γυνὴ
χρῄζουσ' ἂν εὕροι δαιτὶ προσφορήματα.
ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τοσαῦτά γ' ἐν δόμοις ἔτι
ὥσθ' ἕν γ' ἐπ' ἦμαρ τούσδε πληρῶσαι βορᾶς.
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις δ' ἡνίκ' ἂν γνώμῃ πέσω,
σκοπῶ τὰ χρήμαθ' ὡς ἔχει μέγα σθένος
ξένοις τε δοῦναι σῶμά τ' ἐς νόσους πεσὸν
δαπάναισι σῶσαι· τῆς δ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν βορᾶς
ἐς σμικρὸν ἥκει· πᾶς γὰρ ἐμπλησθεὶς ἀνὴρ
ὁ πλούσιός τε χὠ πένης ἴσον φέρει.

Χο. κλειναὶ νᾶες, αἵ ποτ' ἔβατε Τροίαν [*στρ. α*
τοῖς ἀμετρήτοις ἐρετμοῖς
πέμπουσαι χοροὺς μετὰ Νηρῄδων
ἵν' ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελ-
φὶς πρῴραις κυανεμβόλοις
εἰλισσόμενος,
πορεύων τὸν τᾶς Θέτιδος
κοῦφον ἅλμα ποδῶν Ἀχιλῆ
σὺν Ἀγαμέμνονι Τρωΐας
ἐπὶ Σιμουντίδας ἀκτάς.

426–31 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.31.7; alluded to in Dio Chrysostom 7.82, 92 and 97; 428–9 ξένοις...σῶσαι cited without ascription in Plutarch, *Moralia* 33c citing a parody by Cleanthes (fr. 562 von Arnim) 426 γνώμῃ πέσω Seidler γνώμη πέσοι L γνώμης πέσω Stob. γνώμη πέσῃ Schaefer 428 ξένοις L (implied in Dio 7.82) φίλοις Plut., Stob. νόσους Plut. νόσον L, Stob. 431 τε Stob. γε L 434 χορεύματα Diggle 435–7 quoted in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1317–8 435 φίλαυλος Tr, Ar. φιλάδελφος (L)P 436–7 κυανεμβόλοις (Ar.) εἰειλισσόμενος Tr κυανεμβόλοισιν εἰλισσόμενος L

no, it would be galling news for that ruthless woman if she heard from us that Orestes lives.

Peasant. Well, if you think so, I'll report this news[420] to the old man. But you, go into the house right away and get everything in there ready. A woman can find plenty of supplies for a dinner when she needs to. And in fact there's enough remaining in the house to fill these men with food for at least one day.[425]

(Electra goes into the house.)

When I light on situations like this in my thinking, I contemplate money: it has great power, of course, for giving to guests and spending to save a body fallen into sickness. Yet for one's daily food it amounts to little. Every man, you see, once filled,[430] either wealthy or poor, holds as much as the next.

He departs by eisodos B. The Chorus remains:

Chorus. Famous ships, that once went Troyward *[Strophe 1*
with those countless oars,
conducting dances with the Nereids
in which the aulos-loving dolphin[435]
leaped and whirled
at their dark-nosed prows,
bringing the son of Thetis,
Achilles light-springing in his step,
with Agamemnon to the shores[440]
of Simois by Troy.

Νηρῇδες δ' Εὐβοΐδας ἄκρας λιποῦσαι [*ἀντ. α*
Ἡφαίστου χρυσέους ἀκμόνων
μόχθους ἀσπιστᾶν ἔφερον τευχέων,
ἀνά τε Πήλιον ἀνά τ' ἐρυ-
μνᾶς Ὄσσας ἱερὰς νάπας,
νυμφαίας σκοπιάς,
†κόρας μάτευσ'† ἔνθα πατὴρ
ἱππότας τρέφεν Ἑλλάδι φῶς
Θέτιδος εἰναλίας γόνον
ταχύπορον πόδ' Ἀτρείδαις.

Ἰλιόθεν δ' ἔκλυόν τινος ἐν λιμέσιν [*στρ. β*
Ναυπλίοις βεβῶτος
τᾶς σᾶς, ὦ Θέτιδος παῖ,
κλεινᾶς ἀσπίδος ἐν κύκλῳ
τοιάδε σήματα δείματα
Φρύγια τετύχθαι·
περιδρόμῳ μὲν ἵτυος ἕδρᾳ
Περσέα λαιμοτόμαν ὑπὲρ ἁλὸς
ποτανοῖσι πεδίλοις κορυφὰν Γοργόνος ἴσχειν,
Διὸς ἀγγέλῳ σὺν Ἑρμᾷ,
τῷ Μαίας ἀγροτῆρι κούρῳ.

ἐν δὲ μέσῳ κατέλαμπε σάκει φαέθων [*ἀντ. β*
κύκλος ἁλίοιο
ἵπποις ἂμ πτεροέσσαις
ἄστρων τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί,
Πλειάδες Ὑάδες, Ἕκτορος
ὄμμασι τροπαῖοι·

442 ἄκρας Orelli ἀκτὰς L 443–4 χρυσέους...ἀσπιστᾶν Weil χρυσέων...ἀσπιστὰς L μόχθους ἀσπιστὰς...Ἡφαίστου χρυσέων Headlam 445 τ' ἐρυμνᾶς Wilamowitz (τ' ἐρυμνὰς Musgrave) τε πρυμνὰς L (–νὰς...Ὄσσας ἱερᾶς Hermann) 449 τρέφεν Tr ἔτρεφεν ⟨L⟩P 450 εἰναλίας Kvičala (–ου Walberg, –ον Bothe) ἐνάλιον L 456–7 δείματα ⟨γᾷ⟩ Φρυγίᾳ Diggle (cf. 468–9) 459 λαιμοτόμαν Seidler –τόμον L ἅλμας Weil 460 πεδίλοις κορυφὰν Herwerden πεδίλοισι φυὰν L 465 ἁλίοιο Wilamowitz ἀελ– L 466 ἂμ Seidler (ἂν Tr) ἀντὶ LP 468–9 ὄμμασιν Ἑκτορέοις Diggle (cf. 456–7) 469 τροπαῖοι Barnes –αίοις L

Nereids leaving Euboean capes *[Antistrophe 1*
bore golden workings from Hephaestus' anvil,
a shield-bearer's equipage,
up along Pelion, along
sheer Ossa's sacred wooded slopes,
lookouts of the nymphs,
†*seeking the maidens?*† where the old
horse-man was nurturing for Hellas a bright light,
sea-dwelling Thetis' child,
a swift-moving runner for the Atreidae.

From a man arrived from Troy *[Strophe 2*
in Nauplia's harbour I heard,
O son of Thetis,
that on the circle of your famous shield
these emblems were fashioned, terrors for the Phrygians.
On the rim's encircling field
was Perseus above the brine on flying sandals,
holding, throat severed, the Gorgon's head,
in company with Zeus's herald Hermes,
that rustic son of Maia.

And on the buckler's centre shone down, radiant, *[Antistr. 2*
the circle of the sun
on his winged horses,
and ethereal choruses of stars —
Pleiades, Hyades — to turn back Hector's eyes.

ἐπὶ δὲ χρυσοτύπῳ κράνει
Σφίγγες ὄνυξιν ἀοίδιμον ἄγραν
φέρουσαι· περιπλεύρῳ δὲ κύτει πύρπνοος ἔσπευ-
δε δρόμῳ λέαινα χαλαῖς
Πειρηναῖον ὁρῶσα πῶλον.

ἐν δὲ δορεὶ φονίῳ τετραβάμονες ἵπποι ἔπαλλον, [*ἐπῳδ.*
κελαινὰ δ' ἀμφὶ νῶθ' ἵετο κόνις.
τοιῶνδ' ἄνακτα δοριπόνων
ἔκανεν ἀνδρῶν, Τυνδαρί,
σὰ λέχεα, κακόφρον κόρα.
τοιγάρ σοί ποτ' οὐρανίδαι
πέμψουσιν θανάτου δίκαν.
ἔτ' ἔτι φόνιον ὑπὸ δέραν
ὄψομαι αἷμα χυθὲν σιδάρῳ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ποῦ ποῦ νεᾶνις πότνι' ἐμὴ δέσποινά τε,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὅν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ;
ὡς πρόσβασιν τῶνδ' ὀρθίαν οἴκων ἔχει
ῥυσῷ γέροντι τῷδε προσβῆναι ποδί.
ὅμως δὲ πρός γε τοὺς φίλους ἐξελκτέον
διπλῆν ἄκανθαν καὶ παλίρροπον γόνυ.
ὦ θύγατερ — ἄρτι γάρ σε πρὸς δόμοις ὁρῶ —
ἥκω φέρων σοι τῶν ἐμῶν βοσκημάτων
ποίμνης νεογνὸν θρέμμ' ὑποσπάσας τόδε
στεφάνους τε τευχέων τ' ἐξελὼν τυρεύματα,
πολιόν τε θησαύρισμα Διονύσου τόδε
ὀσμῇ κατῆρες, σμικρὸν ἀλλ' ἐπεσβαλεῖν
ἡδὺ σκύφον τοῦδ' ἀσθενεστέρῳ ποτῷ.
ἴτω φέρων τις τοῖς ξένοις τάδ' ἐς δόμους.

475 ὁρῶσα Bothe θ' ὁρῶσα L 476 δορεὶ Hermann δορὶ L ἄορι δ' ἐν Hartung (ἐν δ' ἄορι Musgrave) 481 κακόφρον Radermacher -φρων L κόρα Dindorf κούρα L 483–4 σοί...πέμψουσιν θανάτου δίκαν Diggle (σοί...θανάτοις ἴσαν δίκαν Murray) σέ... πέμψουσι θανάτοισι· κἂν L 489 τήνδ' Musgrave πρόσβασις...ὀρθίως...ἔχει Scaliger 490 πόδα Elmsley 494 quoted in P. Herc. 1081 fr. 16.22–3 497 πολιόν Scaliger παλαιόν L 499 τοῦδ' Reiske τῶδ' (i.e. τῷδ') L

And on the helm of beaten gold
were Sphinxes bearing in their talons their sung prey;
and on the hollow corslet, breathing fire,
sped at a run the lioness on clawed feet,
as she saw the Peirenean colt.

And on the slaughtering spear leapt four-stepping horses *[Epode*
and dust was billowing dark about their backs.
Such were those spear-toiling men
whose lord your union killed,
you evil-minded daughter of Tyndareus.
For that shall the gods in heaven one day
send death upon you in retribution.
Yet, yet shall I see beneath your throat
the deadly gush of iron-spilled blood.

The Old Man arrives by eisodos B, carrying a lamb and other provisions.

OLD MAN

Where, where is my young lady, my princess, daughter of Agamemnon whom I once raised? How steep the approach to this house for this wrinkled old man to climb on foot! But still, these are my friends, and to them I must drag my doubled spine and crooked legs.

(Electra and a servant come out of the cottage.)

My daughter — for now I see you by the house — I've come, and bring you from my livestock this suckling lamb that I've plucked from my flock; garlands as well, and cheeses taken from storage, and this hoary treasure of Dionysus, rich in bouquet — not much, but it's delicious to add a cup of it to a weaker drink. Let someone take these into the house for your

ἐγὼ δὲ τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων κόρας
δακρύοισι τέγξας ἐξομόρξασθαι θέλω.
Ηλ. τί δ', ὦ γεραιέ, διάβροχον τόδ' ὄμμ' ἔχεις;
μῶν τἀμὰ διὰ χρόνου σ' †ἀνέμνησαν† κακά;
ἢ τὰς Ὀρέστου τλήμονας φυγὰς στένεις
καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, ὅν ποτ' ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
ἀνόνητ' ἔθρεψάς σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς φίλοις;
Πρ. ἀνόνηθ'· ὅμως δ' οὖν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἠνεσχόμην.
ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ
καὶ προσπεσὼν ἔκλαυσ' ἐρημίας τυχών,
σπονδάς τε, λύσας ἀσκὸν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,
ἔσπεισα, τύμβῳ δ' ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.
πυρᾶς δ' ἔπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχιμον πόκῳ
σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἱμά τ' οὐ πάλαι χυθὲν
ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους.
κἀθαύμασ', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη
πρὸς τύμβον ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.
ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρᾳ,
μολὼν δ' ἐθαύμασ' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.
σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθεῖσα σῇ κόμῃ,
εἰ χρῶμα ταὐτὸν κουρίμης ἔσται τριχός·
φιλεῖ γάρ, αἷμα ταὐτὸν οἷς ἂν ᾖ πατρός,
τὰ πόλλ' ὅμοια σώματος πεφυκέναι.
Ηλ. οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὦ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις,
εἰ κρυπτὸν ἐς γῆν τήνδ' ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ
δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῆ μολεῖν.
ἔπειτα χαίτης πῶς συνοίσεται πλόκος,
ὁ μὲν παλαίστραις ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς τραφείς,
ὁ δὲ κτενισμοῖς θῆλυς; ἀλλ' ἀμήχανον.
πολλοῖς δ' ἂν εὕροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους
καὶ μὴ γεγῶσιν αἵματος ταὐτοῦ, γέρον.
Πρ. σὺ δ' εἰς ἴχνος βᾶσ' ἀρβύλης σκέψαι βάσιν
εἰ σύμμετρος σῷ ποδὶ γενήσεται, τέκνον.

504 ἀνέμνησεν (Dobree) κακῶν Diggle 505 ἢ Cropp 508 δ' οὖν Elmsley γοῦν L lacuna following: Schenkl 518–44 del. Mau and others, 524–44 Vitelli, 532–44 F. W. Schmidt, 520–3 and 527–46 (or 518–23 and 527–44) West: see Commentary 521 χρῶμα ταὐτὸν Scaliger (ταὐτὸ) χρῶματ' αὐτῆς L

guests *(the servant obeys)*.[500] I need to use this threadbare garment of mine to dry off my eyes, now that I've soaked them with tears.

Electra. But why, old friend, is your face so damp with tears? Perhaps after so long †*they've reminded*† you of my troubles? Or are you grieving for Orestes' miserable exile,[505] and my father whom you once held in your arms and raised, unprofitably for yourself and those dear to you?

Old Man. Yes, unprofitably; yet this I did not endure. I went to his tomb, as a side-trip from my journey, and fell down and wept at it, finding it deserted.[510] I opened the wineskin that I've brought for your guests and poured a libation, and laid some sprays of myrtle about the tomb. Then right on the hearth I saw an offering, a black-fleeced sheep, and blood just lately spilled, and shorn-off locks of auburn hair.[515] And so I wondered, child, who in the world had dared to visit the tomb — no Argive, surely. But maybe your brother came in secret, and when he came, did honour to his father's wretched tomb. Look at the hair, then; put it against your own[520] and see if the colour of the cut hair will match it. In those who share the same paternal blood, most physical features tend to be similar.

Electra. What you say, old man, will get you no credit for wisdom, if you suppose that my courageous brother would enter this land furtively for fear of Aegisthus.[526] And then, how can two locks of hair match each other, when one is tended in a nobleman's wrestling-grounds and the other is combed and feminine? No, it's impossible! And anyway you could find many people with matching hair[530] even when they're not of the same blood, old man.

Old Man. Then step into the footmarks and see if the shoe-print measures the same as your foot, child.

Ηλ. πῶς δ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἐν κραταιλέῳ πέδῳ
γαίας ποδῶν ἔκμακτρον; εἰ δ' ἔστιν τόδε,
δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν ποὺς ἂν οὐ γένοιτ' ἴσος
ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλ' ἄρσην κρατεῖ.
Πρ. οὐκ ἔστιν, εἰ καὶ γῆν κασίγνητος μολὼν
⟨ ⟩
κερκίδος ὅτῳ γνοίης ἂν ἐξύφασμα σῆς,
ἐν ᾧ ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐξέκλεψα μὴ θανεῖν;
Ηλ. οὐκ οἶσθ', Ὀρέστης ἡνίκ' ἐκπίπτει χθονός,
νέαν μ' ἔτ' οὖσαν; εἰ δὲ κἄκρεκον πέπλους,
πῶς ἂν τότ' ὢν παῖς ταὐτὰ νῦν ἔχοι φάρη,
εἰ μὴ ξυναύξοινθ' οἱ πέπλοι τῷ σώματι;
ἀλλ' ἤ τις αὐτοῦ τάφον ἐποικτίρας ξένος
†ἐκείρατ' ἢ τῆσδε σκοποὺς λαβὼν χθονός†.
Πρ. οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; βούλομαι γὰρ εἰσιδὼν
αὐτοὺς ἐρέσθαι σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.
Ηλ. οἵδ' ἐκ δόμων βαίνουσι λαιψηρῷ ποδί.
Πρ. ἀλλ' εὐγενεῖς μέν, ἐν δὲ κιβδήλῳ τόδε·
πολλοὶ γὰρ ὄντες εὐγενεῖς εἰσιν κακοί.
ὅμως δὲ χαίρειν τοὺς ξένους προσεννέπω.
Ορ. χαῖρ', ὦ γεραιέ. τοῦ ποτ', Ἠλέκτρα, τόδε
παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον φίλων κυρεῖ;
Ηλ. οὗτος τὸν ἀμὸν πατέρ' ἔθρεψεν, ὦ ξένε.
Ορ. τί φῄς; ὅδ' ὃς σὸν ἐξέκλεψε σύγγονον;
Ηλ. ὅδ' ἔσθ' ὁ σώσας κεῖνον, εἴπερ ἔστ' ἔτι.
Ορ. ἔα·
τί μ' ἐσδέδορκεν ὥσπερ ἀργύρου σκοπῶν
λαμπρὸν χαρακτῆρ'; ἦ προσεικάζει μέ τῳ;
Ηλ. ἴσως Ὀρέστου σ' ἥλιχ' ἥδεται βλέπων.
Ορ. φίλου γε φωτός. τί δὲ κυκλεῖ πέριξ πόδα;
Ηλ. καὐτὴ τόδ' εἰσορῶσα θαυμάζω, ξένε.
Πρ. ὦ πότνι', εὔχου, θύγατερ Ἠλέκτρα, θεοῖς.
Ηλ. τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι;

538 οὐκ L^{sl} εἰ δ' L οὐδ' Weil μόλοι Musgrave lacuna following: Matthiae 543 ταὐτὰ νῦν Barnes νῦν ταῦτ' ἂν L ἔχοι L^{sl} ἔχη (i.e. -η) L 545–6 del. Dindorf 546 λαθὼν Victorius lacuna following: Mau 550–1 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.29.36 556 ἐξέκλεψε Pierson ἐξέθρεψε L

Electra. But how on earth could feet make an impression on rock-hard ground? And even if that is so,[535] two siblings' footprints are not going to match, when one is male, one female; the man's will be bigger.

Old Man. Is there not, if your brother has actually come to the land and . . . . . , a piece of weaving from your loom by which you could recognize him, the one in which I stole him away from death?[540]

Electra. Don't you know that when Orestes fled from the land I was still a child? And if I had been weaving clothes, how could he who was then a boy still have the same clothing, unless it grew up along with his body? No, either some stranger took pity on his grave[545] †*and cut the lock, or taking observers of this land*†.

Old Man. But your guests, where are they? I'd like to see them and ask them in person about your brother.

Electra. Here they come now, swift-footed, out of the house.

(They enter.)

Old Man. Well, they are noble, but that may be deceptive;[550] for many who are noble are no good. But all the same, I bid welcome to your guests.

Orestes. Greetings, old man — which of your friends, Electra, does this old remnant of a man belong to?

Elec. This is the man who raised our father, stranger.[555]

Ores. You mean the one who stole your brother away?

Elec. Yes, this is the man who saved him, if he survives.

(The Old Man has begun to pay close attention to Orestes.)

Ores. Hold on: why is he staring at me, as if inspecting a silver coin's shiny marking? Is he comparing me with someone?

Elec. Perhaps he's glad to see you, as a comrade of Orestes.[560]

Ores. Well, Orestes is certainly dear to me, But why circle round me?

Elec. I too am surprised at seeing this, stranger.

O.M My lady Electra, my daughter, pray to the gods.

Elec. What in the world is it that you want me to pray for?

Πρ. λαβεῖν φίλον θησαυρόν, ὃν φαίνει θεός.
Ηλ. ἰδού· καλῶ θεούς. ἦ τί δὴ λέγεις, γέρον;
Πρ. βλέψον νυν ἐς τόνδ', ὦ τέκνον, τὸν φίλτατον.
Ηλ. πάλαι δέδορκα· μὴ σύ γ' οὐκέτ' εὖ φρονεῖς;
Πρ. οὐκ εὖ φρονῶ 'γὼ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων;
Ηλ. πῶς εἶπας, ὦ γεραί', ἀνέλπιστον λόγον;
Πρ. ὁρᾶν Ὀρέστην τόνδε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος.
Ηλ. ποῖον χαρακτῆρ' εἰσιδών, ᾧ πείσομαι;
Πρ. οὐλὴν παρ' ὀφρύν, ἣν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ἡμάχθη πεσών.
Ηλ. πῶς φῄς; ὁρῶ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον.
Πρ. ἔπειτα μέλλεις προσπίτνειν τοῖς φιλτάτοις;
Ηλ. ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ὦ γεραιέ· συμβόλοισι γὰρ
τοῖς σοῖς πέπεισμαι θυμόν. ὦ χρόνῳ φανείς,
ἔχω σ' ἀέλπτως — Ορ. κἀξ ἐμοῦ γ' ἔχῃ χρόνῳ.
Ηλ. οὐδέποτε δόξασ' — Ορ. οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤλπισα.
Ηλ. ἐκεῖνος εἶ σύ; Ορ. σύμμαχός γέ σοι μόνος·
ἦν δ' ἀνσπάσωμαί γ' ὃν μετέρχομαι βόλον
〈 〉
πέποιθα δ'· ἢ χρὴ μηκέθ' ἡγεῖσθαι θεούς,
εἰ τἄδικ' ἔσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα.

Χο. ἔμολες ἔμολες, ὤ, χρόνιος ἀμέρα,
κατέλαμψας, ἔδειξας ἐμφανῆ
πόλει πυρσόν, ὃς παλαιᾷ φυγᾷ
πατρίων ἀπὸ δωμάτων τάλας
ἀλαίνων ἔβα.
θεὸς αὖ θεὸς ἀμετέραν τις ἄγει
νίκαν, ὦ φίλα.
ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον, ἴει λιτὰς
ἐς θεούς, τύχᾳ σοι τύχᾳ
κασίγνητον ἐμβατεῦσαι πόλιν.

568 φρονεῖς L^{ac} –ῆς (i.e. –ῃς) L^{pc} question-mark: Diggle 570 τίν' εἶπας Wecklein 580 οὐδέποτε δόξασ' Musgrave οὐδέποτ' ἐδόξασα L (–ασ' TrP) 582 ἀνσπάσωμαι Weil ἀσπ– L lacuna following: Vitelli 590 αὖ L^{mg}TrP οὖν $L^{?}$

O.M. To get a dear treasure, which a god is revealing.[565]

Electra (raising her hands).

Look, I'm calling on the gods: is that what you mean, old man?

O.M. Look now, my child, on your dearest one here before you.

Elec. I've been looking for some time; are *you* perhaps not in your right mind?

O.M. *I* not in my right mind, when I'm looking at your brother?

Elec. What do you mean, old man, with this incredible claim?[570]

O.M. That I see Orestes here, Agamemnon's son!

Elec. What mark have you observed that I can believe in?

O.M. A scar along the eyebrow, where he once was cut while chasing a fawn with you in your father's house.

Electra (scanning Orestes).

How do you mean? I do see the sign of a fall . . .[575]

O.M. And then you're slow to embrace your dearest one?

Elec. No, old man, no longer. My heart is convinced by your proofs.
(She embraces Orestes). O, you've appeared at last;
I'm holding you, as I never hoped to.
— *Ores.* And are held by me too at last.

Elec. I never expected it! — *Ores.* Nor did I hope for it either![580]

Elec. You are truly he? — *Ores.* Yes he, your only ally.
But if I pull in the catch I'm going after . . . *(a line missing)* . . .
And I'm sure of it; or we must acknowledge the gods no longer,
if wrongdoing is going to win out over justice.

They continue their embrace while the Chorus sings:

Chorus. You have come, O, you have come, long-awaited day;[585]
you have shone forth, you have shown bright and clear
to our city a beacon-light, who in long exile
went wandering, wretched,
from his ancestral home.
A god now, a god brings on[590]
our victory, dear friend.
Raise your hands, raise your words, send prayers
to the gods, that with favouring fortune
your brother may set foot in the city.[595]

Ορ. εἶέν· φίλας μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων
ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὖθις αὐτὰ δώσομεν.
σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιέ, καίριος γὰρ ἦλυθες,
λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τεισαίμην πατρὸς
μητέρα τε ⟨τὴν⟩ κοινωνὸν ἀνοσίων γάμων;
ἔστιν τί μοι κατ' Ἄργος εὐμενὲς φίλων,
ἢ πάντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ', ὥσπερ αἱ τύχαι;
τῷ ξυγγένωμαι; νύχιος ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν;
ποίαν ὁδὸν τραπώμεθ' εἰς ἐχθροὺς ἐμούς;
Πρ. ὦ τέκνον, οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος.
εὕρημα γάρ τοι χρῆμα γίγνεται τόδε,
κοινῇ μετασχεῖν τἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
σὺ δ' — ἐκ βάθρων γὰρ πᾶς ἀνῄρησαι φίλοις
οὐδ' ἐλλέλοιπας ἐλπίδ' — ἴσθι μου κλύων·
ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ,
πατρῷον οἶκον καὶ πόλιν λαβεῖν σέθεν.
Ορ. τί δῆτα δρῶντες τοῦδ' ἂν ἐξικοίμεθα;
Πρ. κτανὼν Θυέστου παῖδα σήν τε μητέρα.
Ορ. ἥκω 'πὶ τόνδε στέφανον· ἀλλὰ πῶς λάβω;
Πρ. τειχέων μὲν ἐλθὼν ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἰ θέλοις.
Ορ. φρουραῖς κέκασται δεξιαῖς τε δορυφόρων;
Πρ. ἔγνως· φοβεῖται γάρ σε κοὐχ εὕδει σαφῶς.
Ορ. εἶέν· σὺ δὴ τοὐνθένδε βούλευσον, γέρον.
Πρ. τἄμ' οὖν ἄκουσον· ἄρτι γάρ μ' ἐσῆλθέ τι.
Ορ. ἐσθλόν τι μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην δ' ἐγώ.
Πρ. Αἴγισθον εἶδον, ἡνίχ' εἶρπον ἐνθάδε.
Ορ. προσηκάμην τὸ ῥηθέν. ἐν ποίοις τόποις;
Πρ. ἀγρῶν πέλας τῶνδ', ἱπποφορβίων ἔπι.
Ορ. τί δρῶνθ'; ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ἀμηχάνων.
Πρ. Νύμφαις ἐπόρσυν' ἔροτιν, ὡς ἔδοξέ μοι.
Ορ. τροφεῖα παίδων ἢ πρὸ μέλλοντος τόκου;
Πρ. οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· βουσφαγεῖν ὡπλίζετο.
Ορ. πόσων μετ' ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμώων μέτα;
Πρ. οὐδεὶς παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χείρ.
Ορ. οὔ πού τις ὅστις γνωριεῖ μ' ἰδών, γέρον;

600 ⟨τὴν⟩ Canter 619 τἄμ' οὖν Weil κἀμοῦ γ' L

Orestes (ending the embrace). Well, then; I have the welcome joys of greeting, and in due course will give them once again. But tell me, old man, since you've come at just the right moment, what should I do to repay my father's killer and my mother, his partner in an unholy marriage?[600] Is there any goodwill from friends for me in Argos, or am I wholly bereft as my fortunes are? Whom can I join with? Meeting by night or day? What kind of path can I take against my enemies?

Old Man. My son, no one is a friend to you in your misfortune.[605] Such an asset is a rare find indeed, to share together in good and bad alike. But you — since to your friends you're wholly ruined from the ground up, and have left them no hope — take it from me: everything depends on your own action and on fortune,[610] to capture your ancestral home and city.

Ores. What, in that case, should I do to reach this goal?

O.M Kill the son of Thyestes and your mother.

Ores. That is the crown I've come for; but how can I win it?

O.M. Not by going within the walls, even if you wanted to.[615]

Ores. He's well equipped with lookouts and bodyguards?

O.M. You've got it; he fears you and does not sleep soundly.

Ores. Well, then, advise me what follows from that, old man.

O.M. Hear my suggestion, then; for something just struck me.

Ores. May you disclose something useful, and I perceive it.[620]

O.M. I saw Aegisthus as I made my way here.

Ores. I accept the utterance. Whereabouts was that?

O.M. Out on his horse-pastures, not far from these fields.

Ores. Doing what? I see hope emerging from this impasse.

O.M. Preparing a feast for the Nymphs, so it seemed to me.[625]

Ores. In thanks for his children's nurture, or an expected birth?

O.M. I know only this: he was equipped for an ox-sacrifice.

Ores. With how many men? Or was it just him with his slaves?

O.M. There were no Argives, just a party from his household.

Ores. No one, I hope, who will know me on sight, old man?[630]

Πρ. δμῶες μέν εἰσιν, οἳ σέ γ' οὐκ εἶδόν ποτε.
Ορ. ἡμῖν ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῖμεν, εὐμενεῖς;
Πρ. δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον.
Ορ. πῶς οὖν ἂν αὐτῷ πλησιασθείην ποτέ;
Πρ. στείχων ὅθεν σε βουθυτῶν ἐσόψεται.
Ορ. ὁδὸν παρ' αὐτήν, ὡς ἔοικ', ἀγροὺς ἔχει;
Πρ. ὅθεν ⟨γ'⟩ ἰδών σε δαιτὶ κοινωνὸν καλεῖ.
Ορ. πικρόν γε συνθοινάτορ', ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ.
Πρ. τοὐνθένδε πρὸς τὸ πῖπτον αὐτὸς ἐννόει.
Ορ. καλῶς ἔλεξας. ἡ τεκοῦσα δ' ἐστὶ ποῦ;
Πρ. Ἄργει· παρέσται δ' οὖν πόσει θοίνην ἔπι.
Ορ. τί δ' οὐχ ἅμ' ἐξωρμᾶτ' ἐμὴ μήτηρ πόσει;
Πρ. ψόγον τρέμουσα δημοτῶν ἐλείπετο.
Ορ. ξυνῆχ'· ὕποπτος οὖσα γιγνώσκει πόλει.
Πρ. τοιαῦτα· μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή.
Ορ. πῶς οὖν; ἐκείνην τόνδε τ' ἐν ταὐτῷ κτενῶ;
Ηλ. ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι.
Ορ. καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνά γ' ἡ τύχη θήσει καλῶς.
Ηλ. ὑπηρετείτω μὲν δυοῖν ὄντοιν ὅδε.
Πρ. ἔσται τάδ'· εὑρίσκεις δὲ μητρὶ πῶς φόνον;
Ηλ. [λέγ', ὦ γεραιέ, τάδε Κλυταιμήστρᾳ μολών.]
λεχὼ μ' ἀπάγγελλ' οὖσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ.
Πρ. πότερα πάλαι τεκοῦσαν ἢ νεωστὶ δή;
Ηλ. δέχ' ἡλίους, ἐν οἷσιν ἀγνεύει λεχώ.
Πρ. καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτο μητρὶ προσβάλλει φόνον;
Ηλ. ἥξει κλυοῦσα λόχιά μου νοσήματα.
Πρ. πόθεν; †τί δ'† αὐτῇ σοῦ μέλειν δοκεῖς, τέκνον;
Ηλ. ναί· καὶ δακρύσει γ' ἀξίωμ' ἐμῶν τόκων.
Πρ. ἴσως· πάλιν μοι μῦθον ἐς καμπὴν ἄγε.
Ηλ. ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι δῆλον ὡς ἀπόλλυται.

631 οἳ σέ γ' Pierson οὓς ἐγὼ $L^?$ οὓς ἔγ' TrP 633 δούλων Tr λέξων $(L^?)P$ 637 ⟨γ'⟩ Barnes 638 γε Reiske τε L 641 οὖν Nauck ἐν L 646 punctuation: Denniston 647 ἐξαρτύσομαι Victorius ἐξαρτίσομαι L^{rp} ἐξαιτήσομαι L 649 μὲν L δ' εἷς Weil ὅδε Tyrwhitt τόδε L 650 Op. Dobree 651 del. Matthiae lacuna following: Camper 654 δέχ' Elmsley λέγ' L 656 λόχιά μου νοσήματα Musgrave and (μου) Kirchhoff λοχεῖ' ἐμοῦ νοσήματος L 657 σὺ δ' αὐτῇ Weil τοιαύτῃ Diggle 659 μοι Diggle τοι L ἄγε Jortin ἄγω L

O.M. They are slaves of the house, but have never seen you before.
Ores. And they'll be friendly to us, should we prevail?
O.M. Yes, that's typical of slaves, and to your advantage.
Ores. How, then, can I contrive to get close to him?
O.M. By going to where he will notice you as he sacrifices.[635]
Ores. You mean his fields are right beside the road?
O.M. Yes, he'll see you from there and call you to share his feast.
Ores. A galling fellow-banqueter, god willing!
O.M. From there you must plan your moves as the dice may fall.
Ores. That's good advice. But where is my mother meanwhile?[640]
O.M. In Argos; but she'll join her husband for the banquet.
Ores. But why did she not set out along with him?
O.M. She stayed behind through fear of the people's censure.
Ores. I see; she knows the city despises her.
O.M. Just so; an unholy woman attracts abhorrence.[645]
Ores. How, then: shall I kill both her and him together?
Electra (breaking in).
I shall contrive our mother's murder myself.
Ores. Yes, and fortune as well will settle that.
Elec. First, let the old man here assist us both.
O.M. So be it; but what manner of murder have you found for your mother?[650]
Elec. [Go to Clytemnestra, old man, and tell her this:]
Report that I'm confined with the birth of a son.
O.M. Having borne him some time ago, or just recently?
Elec. Ten days ago — those of isolation after a birth.
O.M. And how does that bring murder upon your mother?[655]
Elec. She'll come when she hears I'm ailing in child-bed.
O.M. How so? †*And why*† do you think she cares about you, child?
Elec. Yes, and she'll deplore my child's low birth as well.
O.M. I suppose so; but please bring your story back to the finish.
Elec. Well, once she comes, it's clear she perishes.[660]

Πρ. καὶ μὴν ἐπ' αὐτάς γ' εἶσι σῶν δόμων πύλας.
Ηλ. οὔκουν τραπέσθαι σμικρὸν εἰς Ἅιδου τότε;
Πρ. εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι τοῦτ' ἰδὼν ἐγώ ποτε.
Ηλ. πρώτιστα μέν νυν τῷδ' ὑφήγησαι, γέρον.
Πρ. Αἴγισθος ἔνθα νῦν θυηπολεῖ θεοῖς;
Ηλ. ἔπειτ' ἀπαντῶν μητρὶ τἀπ' ἐμοῦ φράσον.
Πρ. ὥστ' αὐτά γ' ἐκ σοῦ στόματος εἰρῆσθαι δοκεῖν.
Ηλ. σὸν ἔργον ἤδη· πρόσθεν εἴληχας φόνου.
Ορ. στείχοιμ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμὼν γίγνοιθ' ὁδοῦ.
Πρ. καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ πέμποιμ' ἂν οὐκ ἀκουσίως.
Ορ. ὦ Ζεῦ πατρῷε καὶ τροπαῖ' ἐχθρῶν ἐμῶν,
οἴκτιρέ γ' ἡμᾶς· οἰκτρὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν.
Πρ. οἴκτιρε δῆτα, σούς γε φύντας ἐκγόνους.
Ηλ. Ἥρα τε βωμῶν ἣ Μυκηναίων κρατεῖς,
νίκην δὸς ἡμῖν, εἰ δίκαι' αἰτούμεθα.
Πρ. δὸς δῆτα πατρὸς τοῖσδε τιμωρὸν δίκην.
Ορ. σύ τ' ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν πάτερ,
⟨Ηλ.⟩ καὶ Γαῖ' ἄνασσα, χεῖρας ᾗ δίδωμ' ἐμάς,
⟨Πρ.⟩ ἄμυν' ἄμυνε τοῖσδε φιλτάτοις τέκνοις.
⟨Ορ.⟩ νῦν πάντα νεκρὸν ἐλθὲ σύμμαχον λαβών,
⟨Ηλ.⟩ οἵπερ γε σὺν σοὶ Φρύγας ἀνήλωσαν δορί.
⟨Πρ.⟩ χὥσοι στυγοῦσιν ἀνοσίους μιάστορας.
⟨Ορ.⟩ ἤκουσας, ὦ δείν' ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς παθών;
Πρ. πάντ', οἶδ', ἀκούει τάδε πατήρ· στείχειν δ' ἀκμή.
Ηλ. πάντ', οἶδα· πρὸς τάδ' ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή.
[καί σοι προφωνῶ πρὸς τάδ' Αἴγισθον θανεῖν·
ὡς εἰ παλαισθεὶς πτῶμα θανάσιμον πεσῇ,
τέθνηκα κἀγὼ μηδέ με ζῶσαν λέγε·
παίσω κάρα γὰρ τοὐμὸν ἀμφήκει ξίφει.]

661 εἶσι σῶν Tucker εἰσίω L 662 τότε Kvičala τόδε L 671–2, 674–5, 677–83 Ορ., 673, 676 Ηλ. L: variously divided by editors (see Commentary) 672 οἴκτειρέ γ' Fix οἰκτείρεθ' L οἴκτειρέ θ' Victorius οἴκτειρον Dobree, Elmsley 678 Γαῖ' Musgrave γῇ τ' L 682 after 683: Reiske ὦ Reiske ὡς L 684 Πρ. Murray Ηλ. (with 685–98) L οἶδ' (i.e. οἶδα) Victorius οἶδεν L 693 after 684 Broadhead (deleting 685–92) and Diggle (deleting 685–9); after 692 with ⟨Ορ.⟩ πάντ' οἶδα· ⟨Ηλ.⟩ πρὸς τάδ' etc. Victorius 685–9 del. Nauck, 685–92 Broadhead, 688–93 Wilamowitz, 688–92 Kovacs, 688 only Jackson 685 κτανεῖν Seidler, Elmsley

O.M. Yes, and she'll come right up to the doors of your house.
Elec. Her turn to Hades will be simple then, will it not?
O.M. If only I could die once I've witnessed that!
Elec. Then first of all, old man, lead the way for Orestes.
O.M. To where Aegisthus is sacrificing to the gods?[665]
Elec. Then meet my mother and deliver my message.
O.M I will, so the words seem to come from your own mouth.
Elec. (to Orestes)
The task is yours now: you've drawn first trial of murder.
Ores. I'm ready to go, if someone will be my guide.
O.M. And I to be your escort, with a will.[670]

The three pray for aid to Zeus, Hera and the spirit of Agamemnon:

Ores. O Zeus Paternal, Router of my enemies,
have pity on us, for pitiably have we suffered .
O.M. Yes, have pity on them, for they are your descendants.
Elec. And Hera, who rulest over Mycenae's altars,
give us victory if our request is just.[675]
O.M. Yes, give them justice in vengeance for their father.
Ores. And thou, father, lodged below earth through unholy murder,
(Elec.) And Lady Earth, on whom I strike my hands,
(O.M.) Defend, defend these dearest children of thine.
(Ores.) Come now, bring all the dead to fight with you,[680]
(Elec.) Those who with you wasted the Phrygians in war,
(O.M.) And those who abhor unholy desecrators.[683]
(Ores.) Have you heard, you who suffered horrors at my mother's hands?[682]
O.M. Your father hears all, I know; it's time to go.[684]
Electra. Yes all, I know; therefore you must play the man.[693] [And I declare to you therefore, Aegisthus must die.[685] For if, outwrestled, you take a fatal fall, I too am dead, and do not call me living; for I shall strike my head with a two-edged sword.] . . .

〈 〉
δόμων ἔσω βᾶσ' εὐτρεπὲς ποιήσομαι.
ὡς ἦν μὲν ἔλθῃ πύστις εὐτυχὴς σέθεν,
ὀλολύξεται πᾶν δῶμα· θνῄσκοντος δέ σου
τἀναντί' ἔσται τῶνδε· ταῦτά σοι λέγω.
ὑμεῖς δέ μοι, γυναῖκες, εὖ πυρσεύετε
κραυγὴν ἀγῶνος τοῦδε· φρουρήσω δ' ἐγὼ
πρόχειρον ἔγχος χειρὶ βαστάζουσ' ἐμῇ.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἐμοῖς νικωμένη
δίκην ὑφέξω, σῶμ' ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι.

Χο. ἀταλὰν ὑπὸ ματέρος †Ἀργείων† [*στρ. α*
ὀρέων ποτὲ κληδὼν
ἐν πολιαῖσι μένει φάμαις
εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις
Πᾶνα μοῦσαν ἡδύθροον
πνέοντ', ἀγρῶν ταμίαν,
χρυσέαν ἄρνα καλλίποκον
πορεῦσαι· πετρίνοις δ' ἐπι-
στὰς κᾶρυξ ἴαχεν βάθροις·
'Ἀγορὰν ἀγοράν, Μυκη-
ναῖοι, στείχετε μακαρίων
ὀψόμενοι τυράννων
φάσματα †δείματα†.'
χοροὶ δ' Ἀτρειδᾶν ἐγέραιρον οἴκους.

θυμέλαι δ' ἐπίτναντο χρυσήλατοι, [*ἀντ. α*
σελαγεῖτο δ' ἀν' ἄστυ
πῦρ ἐπιβώμιον Ἀργείων·
λωτὸς δὲ φθόγγον κελάδει
κάλλιστον, Μουσᾶν θεράπων,
μολπαὶ δ' ηὔξοντ' ἐραταὶ

688 κέαρ γὰρ Reiske γὰρ ἧπαρ Geel 689 δόμων ⟨δ'⟩ Victorius lacuna preceding: Jackson 699 ἀταλὰν Page –ᾶς L 701 φάμαις Bothe φήμαις L 705 καλλίποκον Heath καλλιπλόκαμον L 706 δ' Kirchhoff τ' L 707 ἴαχεν Elmsley ἰάχει L 711 δείγματα Hermann δεινὰ· χοροὶ δ' | ⟨αὐτίκ'⟩ Denniston (χοροῖ⟨σιν⟩ δ' Diggle) δείματα· κῶ|μοι Erfurdt δείματ' ⟨ἰδεῖν⟩ Cropp

. . . *(a line missing)* . . . going inside the house I shall prepare . . . For if happy information comes from you,[690] the whole house will sing with ululation; but if you die, it will be the opposite; that I say to you.[692]

(She turns to the Chorus.)

But you, women, take care to cry out the beacon-news[694] of this contest, while I will keep watch,[695] brandishing a sword ready in my hand. For never in defeat shall I allow my foes the reprisal of outraging my body.

The men set off by eisodos B. Electra withdraws into the cottage. The Chorus remains and sings:

Chorus. Still young from beneath its mother †*of the Argive*† mountains once — so the report[700] endures amongst our greying tales — *[Strophe 1*
Pan, country-master,
breathing his sweet-voiced music
on deft-joined reeds, brought down
a fine-fleeced golden lamb.[705]
Standing on platform of
stone a herald cried,
'Go all, go all to assembly,
you Mycenaeans, see
what your blessed kings possess,[710]
a marvel, †*a terror*†'!
And choruses honoured the house of the Atreidae.

Gold-wrought censers were opened, *[Antistrophe 1*
and altar-fires blazed
throughout the Argives' town.[715]
The lotus-pipe, servant of the Muses,
sounded with voice of finest beauty,
and songs swelled, ravishing,

χρυσέας ἀρνὸς †ἐπίλογοι†
Θυέστα· κρυφίαις γὰρ εὐ-
  ναῖς πείσας ἄλοχον φίλαν
Ἀτρέως τέρας ἐκκομί-
  ζει πρὸς δώματα· νεόμενος δ'
  εἰς ἀγόρους ἀϋτεῖ
τὰν κερόεσσαν ἔχειν
χρυσεόμαλλον κατὰ δῶμα ποίμναν.

τότε δὴ τότε φαεν- [*στρ. β*
  νὰς ἄστρων μετέβασ' ὁδοὺς
Ζεὺς καὶ φέγγος ἀελίου
λευκόν τε πρόσωπον ἀ-
  οῦς, τὰ δ' ἕσπερα νῶτ' ἐλαύ-
  νει θερμᾷ φλογὶ θεοπύρῳ.
νεφέλαι δ' ἔνυδροι πρὸς ἄρ-
  κτον, ξηραί τ' Ἀμμωνίδες ἕ-
  δραι φθίνουσ' ἀπειρόδροσοι,
καλλίστων ὄμβρων Διόθεν στερεῖσαι.

λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πί- [*ἀντ. β*
  στιν σμικρὰν παρ' ἔμοιγ' ἔχει,
στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον
χρυσωπὸν ἕδραν ἀλλά-
  ξαντα δυστυχίᾳ βροτεί-
  ῳ θνατᾶς ἕνεκεν δίκας.
φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦ-
  θοι κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπεί-
  αν. ὧν οὐ μνασθεῖσα πόσιν
κτείνεις, κλεινῶν συγγενέτειρ' ἀδελφῶν.

719 εὐλογίᾳ Wecklein 720 Θυέστα Willink –ου L 724 ἀϋτεῖ Heath ἀΰτει L 726 χρυσόμαλλον Heath δῶμα Tr δῶματα ⟨L⟩P 727 τότε δὴ τότε ⟨δὴ⟩ Hartung (cf. 737) ⟨τὰς⟩ or ⟨καὶ⟩ Willink 728 μετέβασ' Musgrave μεταβὰς Tr (probably a variant in L's source) μεταβάλλει ⟨L⟩P μετέβαλλ' Heath μετέβαλεν Parmentier 735 ἀπειρόδροσοι Bothe ἄπειροι δρόσου L 737 λέγεται ⟨τάδε⟩ Weil (⟨τόδε⟩ Hartung) λέγεται, τάδε δὲ Porson 739 ἀέλιον Canter –ίου L 740 ἀμείψαντα Dindorf 744 θεραπείαν Wecklein –αις L –ας Matthiae

†*in celebration of*† the golden lamb —
Thyestes' lamb: for he, persuading
in secret union the cherished wife
of Atreus, carries the prodigy
off to his home, and coming
to the assembled throng proclaims
that he holds in his house
the horned, gold-woolled beast.

Then, then, did Zeus transfer *[Strophe 2*
the stars' bright courses,
and the sun's resplendence
with the pale face of dawn;
and now he drives towards the western expanse
with his hot divinely burning flame.
Clouds swell with rain to the north,
and Ammon's arid seat
withers drought-ridden,
bereft by Zeus of his most beauteous showers.

So it is said; but *[Antistrophe 2*
small is the credit it holds with me,
that the golden sun turned about
and changed his torrid station
with detriment to men,
for the sake of a mortal dispute.
Yet fearful tales are profitable to men
in furthering the service of the gods.
And you were unmindful of them when you killed
your husband, sister of glorious brothers.

ἔα ἔα·
φίλαι, βοῆς ἠκούσατ', ἢ δοκῶ κενὴ
ὑπῆλθέ μ', ὥστε νερτέρας βροντῆς Διός;
ἰδού, τάδ' οὐκ ἄσημα πνεύματ' αἴρεται.
δέσποιν', ἄμειψον δώματ', Ἠλέκτρα, τάδε.
Ηλ. φίλαι, τί χρῆμα; πῶς ἀγῶνος ἥκομεν;
Χο. οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· φόνιον οἰμωγὴν κλύω.
Ηλ. ἤκουσα κἀγώ, τηλόθεν μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως.
Χο. μακρὰν γὰρ ἔρπει γῆρυς, ἐμφανής γε μήν.
Ηλ. Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμὸς ἢ φίλων ἐμῶν;
Χο. οὐκ οἶδα· πᾶν γὰρ μείγνυται μέλος βοῆς.
Ηλ. σφαγὴν ἀϋτεῖς τήνδε μοι· τί μέλλομεν;
Χο. ἔπισχε, τρανῶς ὡς μάθῃς τύχας σέθεν.
Ηλ. οὐκ ἔστι· νικώμεσθα· ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι;
Χο. ἥξουσιν· οὗτοι βασιλέα φαῦλον κτανεῖν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ὦ καλλίνικοι παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες,
νικῶντ' Ὀρέστην πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλω φίλοις,
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ φονέα κείμενον πέδῳ
Αἴγισθον· ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὔχεσθαι χρεών.
Ηλ. τίς δ' εἶ σύ; πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε;
Αγ. οὐκ οἶσθ' ἀδελφοῦ μ' εἰσορῶσα πρόσπολον;
Ηλ. ὦ φίλτατ', ἔκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν
εἶχον προσώπου· νῦν δὲ γιγνώσκω σε δή.
τί φῄς; τέθνηκε πατρὸς ἐμοῦ στυγνὸς φονεύς;
Αγ. τέθνηκε· δίς σοι ταῦθ', ἃ γοῦν βούλῃ, λέγω.
Ηλ. ὦ θεοί, Δίκη τε πάνθ' ὁρῶσ', ἦλθές ποτε.
ποίῳ τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ῥυθμῷ φόνου
κτείνει Θυέστου παῖδα; βούλομαι μαθεῖν.
Αγ. ἐπεὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ' ἀπήραμεν πόδα,
ἐσβάντες ἦμεν δίκροτον εἰς ἀμαξιτὸν
ἔνθ' ἦν ὁ καινὸς τῶν Μυκηναίων ἄναξ.
κυρεῖ δὲ κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις βεβώς,

748 νερτέρας βροντῆς Bothe –α –ὴ L 776 καινὸς Elmsley κλεινὸς L

Chorus-leader (speaking).

Wait! Wait! Friends, did you hear a shout (or did a vain impression steal upon me?), as when one hears the nether thunder of Zeus? There, these rising breezes do carry some message. Princess Electra, come out now from the house.[750]

(Electra enters.)

Electra. What is it, friends? How have we fared in the contest?

Ch.-leader. All I know is that I hear a deathly cry.

Electra. I hear it too, far off but audible.

Ch.-leader. The sound travels far, yet still it is distinct.

Electra. Is it Argive, this moaning, or does it come from my friends?[755]

Ch.-leader. I don't know; the sound of the cries is all confused.

Electra. What you say means slaughter for me. Why do I wait?

(She turns as if to go inside and kill herself.)

Ch.-leader. But wait, so you can learn your fortunes for sure.

Electra. It cannot be; we are beaten — or where are our messengers?

Ch.-leader. They'll come. It's no small thing to kill a king.[760]

A messenger (one of Orestes' servants) runs in by eisodos B.

MESSENGER

O daughters of Mycenae, glorious in victory, to all our friends I bring news that Orestes has triumphed. Agamemnon's killer Aegisthus is laid low. Come, you must offer prayers of thanks to the gods.

Elec. Who are you? How can I trust this news of yours?[765]

Mess. Do you not know me on sight, your brother's servant?

Elec. Dearest man, fear made me fail to recognize your face, but now I know you. What are you saying? My father's hated killer is dead?

Mess. He is dead: the same news twice for a willing hearer![770]

Elec. O gods, and all-seeing Justice, you've come at last! What manner, what pattern of murder did he use to kill Thyestes' son? I long to learn it.

Mess. When we had started on our way from the dwelling here, we entered a twin-tracked wagon-path[775] and followed it to where the new lord of the Mycenaeans was. We found him walking in a

ἰδὼν δ' ἀϋτεῖ· 'Χαίρετ', ὦ ξένοι· τίνες
δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρᾳ πλόκους·
πόθεν πορεύεσθ', ἔστε τ' ἐκ ποίας χθονός;'
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀρέστης· 'Θεσσαλοί· πρὸς δ' Ἀλφεὸν
θύσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ' Ὀλυμπίῳ Διί.'
κλυὼν δὲ ταῦτ' Αἴγισθος ἐννέπει τάδε·
'Νῦν μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν χρὴ συνεστίους ἐμοὶ
θοίνης γενέσθαι· τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν
Νύμφαις· ἐῷοι δ' ἐξαναστάντες λέχους
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥξετ'. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους' —
καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμ' ἡγόρευε καὶ χερὸς λαβὼν
παρῆγεν ἡμᾶς — 'οὐδ' ἀπαρνεῖσθαι χρεών.'
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἦμεν, ἐννέπει τάδε·
'λούτρ' ὡς τάχιστα τοῖς ξένοις τις αἰρέτω,
ὡς ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στῶσι χερνίβων πέλας.'
ἀλλ' εἶπ' Ὀρέστης· 'Ἀρτίως ἡγνίσμεθα
λουτροῖσι καθαροῖς ποταμίων ῥείθρων ἄπο.
εἰ δὲ ξένους ἀστοῖσι συνθύειν χρεών,
Αἴγισθ', ἕτοιμοι κοὐκ ἀπαρνούμεσθ', ἄναξ.'
τοῦτον μὲν οὖν μεθεῖσαν ἐκ μέσου λόγον·
λόγχας δὲ θέντες, δεσπότου φρουρήματα,
δμῶες πρὸς ἔργον πάντες ἵεσαν χέρας·
οἱ μὲν σφαγεῖον ἔφερον, οἱ δ' ἦρον κανᾶ,
ἄλλοι δὲ πῦρ ἀνῆπτον ἀμφί τ' ἐσχάραις
λέβητας ὤρθουν· πᾶσα δ' ἐκτύπει στέγη.
λαβὼν δὲ προχύτας μητρὸς εὐνέτης σέθεν
ἔβαλλε βωμούς, τοιάδ' ἐννέπων ἔπη·
'Νύμφαι πετραῖαι, πολλάκις με βουθυτεῖν
καὶ τὴν κατ' οἴκους Τυνδαρίδα δάμαρτ' ἐμὴν
πράσσοντας ὡς νῦν, τοὺς δ' ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς' —
λέγων Ὀρέστην καὶ σέ. δεσπότης δ' ἐμὸς
τἀναντί' ηὔχετ', οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους,
λαβεῖν πατρῷα δώματ'. ἐκ κανοῦ δ' ἑλὼν

779 δ' Blaydes τ' L 780 πορεύεσθ' ἔστε τ' Musgrave πορεύεσθέ τ' L 784 ὁμοῦ Musgrave 785 θοίνης Reiske -ην L 800 σφαγεῖον ἔφερον Scaliger σφάγι' ἐνέφερον L 801 ἐσχάραις Wecklein -ας L

watered orchard, cutting sprays of tender myrtle for his hair. Seeing us he called out, 'Greetings, strangers. Who are you, whence are you travelling, and what is your homeland?'[780] Orestes replied, 'Thessalians; we are going to the Alpheus, to offer sacrifice to Olympian Zeus.' Hearing this, Aegisthus declared: 'Today you must join us and share the feast with me; it happens that I'm sacrificing an ox[785] to the Nymphs. At dawn you shall rise from your beds and continue as before. But come, let's go into the house,' — and as he said this, he took us by the arm and started to lead us in — 'you must not refuse.'

Once we were inside the house, he called out:[790] 'Someone make haste and bring washing-water for the strangers, so they may stand at the altar near the lustrations.' But Orestes said, 'We have lately cleansed ourselves by washing with pure water from a flowing stream. But if strangers may join with citizens in sacrificing,[795] Aegisthus, we are ready and do not refuse, my lord.'

Thus they conversed amidst the company. And putting aside the spears that protected their master, the servants all put their hands to the present work. Some brought a blood-bowl, others lifted baskets,[800] others again kindled fire and set up cauldrons on braziers — the whole building echoed with the noise. Then taking the barley-grains your mother's bedfellow stood strewing the altar and uttering these words: 'Nymphs of the rocks, may I offer sacrifice often,[805] I and my wife at home, Tyndareus' daughter, faring as we now fare, while our foes fare ill' — meaning Orestes and you. But my master prayed the opposite, not voicing the words — to regain his ancestral home.

Αἴγισθος ὀρθὴν σφαγίδα, μοσχείαν τρίχα
τεμὼν ἐφ' ἁγνὸν πῦρ ἔθηκε δεξιᾷ,
κἄσφαξ' ἐπ' ὤμων μόσχον ὡς ἦραν χεροῖν
δμῶες, λέγει δὲ σῷ κασιγνήτῳ τάδε·
"Ἐν τῶν καλῶν κομποῦσι τοῖσι Θεσσαλοῖς
εἶναι τόδ', ὅστις ταῦρον ἀρταμεῖ καλῶς
ἵππους τ' ὀχμάζει· λαβὲ σίδηρον, ὦ ξένε,
δεῖξόν τε φήμην ἔτυμον ἀμφὶ Θεσσαλῶν.'
ὁ δ' εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ' ἁρπάσας χεροῖν,
ῥίψας ἀπ' ὤμων εὐπρεπῆ πορπάματα,
Πυλάδην μὲν εἵλετ' ἐν πόνοις ὑπηρέτην,
δμῶας δ' ἀπωθεῖ· καὶ λαβὼν μόσχου πόδα
λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας ἐκτείνων χερί,
θᾶσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
δισσοὺς διαύλους ἱππίους διήνυσεν,
κἀνεῖτο λαγόνας. ἱερὰ δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
Αἴγισθος ἤθρει. καὶ λοβὸς μὲν οὐ προσῆν
σπλάγχνοις, πύλαι δὲ καὶ δοχαὶ χολῆς πέλας
κακὰς ἔφαινον τῷ σκοποῦντι προσβολάς.
χὠ μὲν σκυθράζει, δεσπότης δ' ἀνιστορεῖ·
'Τί χρῆμ' ἀθυμεῖς;' — ' Ὦ ξέν', ὀρρωδῶ τινα
δόλον θυραῖον. ἔστι δ' ἔχθιστος βροτῶν
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς πολέμιός τ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις.'
ὁ δ' εἶπε· 'Φυγάδος δῆτα δειμαίνεις δόλον,
πόλεως ἀνάσσων; οὐχ, ὅπως παστήρια
θοινασόμεσθα, Φθιάδ' ἀντὶ Δωρικῆς
οἴσει τις ἡμῖν κοπίδ', ἀναρρήξω χέλυν;'
λαβὼν δὲ κόπτει. σπλάγχνα δ' Αἴγισθος λαβὼν
ἤθρει διαιρῶν. τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω
ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στὰς κασίγνητος σέθεν
ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωτιαῖα δὲ
ἔρρηξεν ἄρθρα· πᾶν δὲ σῶμ' ἄνω κάτω
ἥσπαιρεν ἠλέλιζε δυσθνῄσκων φόνῳ.

815 ἐν Scaliger ἐκ L 823 χερί Musgrave χέρα L 825 διήνυσ' ἄν Kovacs
837 ἀναρρήξω Schenkl ἀπορρήξω L ἀναρρῆξαι Wecklein 843 ἠλέλιζε Schenkl
ἠλάλαζεν L δυσθνῄσκων Bothe -θνῆσκον L

Next Aegisthus took from the basket[810] a straight-bladed sacrificial knife, cut a hair from the calf, and placed it with his right hand upon the pure fire; he cut the calf's throat when the servants had lifted it on their shoulders, and said to your brother: 'They say it's an accomplishment with the Thessalians for a man to excel in butchering a bull,[815] and also in breaking horses. Take a knife, stranger, and show what's said about the Thessalians is true.'

Orestes seized a well-beaten Doric blade in his hands, threw back from his shoulders his handsome cloak,[820] and chose Pylades to assist him in his work, pushing the servants away. Then he took the calf's foot and bared the pale flesh, pulling it taut with his hand, and stripped off the skin quicker than a runner completes two horse-track laps,[825] and opened up the flanks. Aegisthus took the sacred parts in his hands, and examined them. On the liver there was no lobe, and the portal vein and gall-bladder showed harmful attacks waiting nearby for the observer. Aegisthus frowned, but my master enquired of him,[830] 'What puts you out of temper?' — 'Stranger, I dread some alien treachery. Agamemnon's son is my greatest enemy and a foe to my house.' Orestes said, 'So you fear foul play from a fugitive — you, the lord of the city? Won't some one help us to feast on the innards[835] and bring me a Phthian cleaver, instead of the Doric, so I may break open the breast bone?' And so he took it and struck; and Aegisthus took the entrails piece by piece and examined them. But as he was leaning down, your brother raised himself on the tips of his toes[840] and smote at his spine, smashing the vertebrae. With all his body Aegisthus quaked and writhed as he died hard and bloodily.

δμῶες δ' ἰδόντες εὐθὺς ᾖξαν ἐς δόρυ,
πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ'· ἀνδρείας δ' ὕπο
ἔστησαν ἀντίπρῳρα σείοντες βέλη
Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ'. εἶπε δ'· 'Οὐχὶ δυσμενὴς
ἥκω πόλει τῇδ' οὐδ' ἐμοῖς ὀπάοσιν,
φονέα δὲ πατρὸς ἀντετιμωρησάμην
τλήμων Ὀρέστης· ἀλλὰ μή με καίνετε,
πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες.' οἱ δ', ἐπεὶ λόγων
ἤκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας· ἐγνώσθη δ' ὑπὸ
γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.
στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα
χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες. ἔρχεται δὲ σοὶ
κάρα 'πιδείξων οὐχὶ Γοργόνος φέρων
ἀλλ' ὃν στυγεῖς, Αἴγισθον. αἷμα δ' αἵματος
πικρὸς δανεισμὸς ἦλθε τῷ θανόντι νῦν.

Χο. θὲς ἐς χορόν, ὦ φίλα, ἴχνος, [*στρ.*
ὡς νεβρὸς οὐράνιον
πήδημα κουφίζουσα σὺν ἀγλαΐᾳ.
νικᾷ στεφαναφόρα κρείσσω τῶν παρ' Ἀλφει-
οῦ ῥεέθροις τελέσας
κασίγνητος σέθεν· ἀλλ' ἐπάειδε
καλλίνικον ᾠδὰν ἐμῷ χορῷ.

Ηλ. ὦ φέγγος, ὦ τέθριππον ἡλίου σέλας,
ὦ γαῖα καὶ νὺξ ἣν ἐδερκόμην πάρος,
νῦν ὄμμα τοὐμὸν ἀμπτυχαί τ' ἐλεύθεροι,
ἐπεὶ πατρὸς πέπτωκεν Αἴγισθος φονεύς.
φέρ', οἷα δὴ 'χω καὶ δόμοι κεύθουσί μου
κόμης ἀγάλματ' ἐξενέγκωμεν, φίλαι,
στέψω τ' ἀδελφοῦ κρᾶτα τοῦ νικηφόρου.

849 δὲ Victorius τὲ L 850 καίνετε Elmsley κτείνετε L 862 νικᾷ Canter νίκας L στεφαναφόρα...τῶν Weil στεφαναφορίαν...τοῖς L 863 ῥεέθροισι τελέσσας Murray (τελέσσας Tr, cf. 877 βασιλῆες L) 864 ὑπάειδε Blaydes 870 δὴ 'χω Canter δὴ 'γω L 871 ἐξενέγκωμεν Lenting -μαι L

The servants, seeing this, straightway rushed for their spears, many for a fight against two;[845] but Pylades and Orestes stood their ground courageously, brandishing their weapons in defiance, and Orestes said: 'I have not come as an enemy to this city, nor to my own retainers, but I have brought retribution to my father's killer, I, hapless Orestes; come, do not kill me,[850] my father's former servants. They, when they heard his words, held back their spears, and he was recognized by an ancient man of the household. Immediately they crowned your brother's head, rejoicing and hallooing. And now he is coming[855] and brings with him to show you, not a Gorgon's head, but the man you hate, Aegisthus. Bloodshed loaned has brought its bitter return for him now killed.

The Messenger leaves by eisodos B to rejoin Orestes. The Chorus sings:

Chorus. Set your foot to the dance, dear friend, leaping *[Strophe*
fawn-like sky-high with festive joy.[861]
Your brother has completed and won a crown-contest
surpassing those by Alpheus' streams. Come, add
the glorious victory-song to my dance.[865]

Electra. O splendour, O chariot-mounted blaze of the Sun, O Earth, and Night that filled my sight before! Now I am free to open up my eyes, for my father's killer, Aegisthus, is fallen. Come, friends, let us bring out such hair-adornments as I have stored in my home,[870] and I shall crown the head of my victorious brother.

(She enters the cottage.)

Χο. σὺ μέν νυν ἀγάλματ' ἄειρε [*ἀντ.*
κρατί· τὸ δ' ἀμέτερον
χωρήσεται Μούσαισι χόρευμα φίλον.
νῦν οἱ πάρος ἀμετέρας γαίας τυραννεύ-
σουσι φίλοι βασιλῆς
δικαίως, τοὺς ἀδίκως καθελόντες.
ἀλλ' ἴτω ξύναυλος βοὰ χαρᾷ.

Ηλ. ὦ καλλίνικε, πατρὸς ἐκ νικηφόρου
γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ μάχης,
δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
ἥκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμὼν
ἀγῶν' ἐς οἴκους ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κἀμὸν ὤλεσεν.
σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου
παίδευμα, Πυλάδη, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
δέχου· φέρῃ γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ' ἴσον μέρος
ἀγῶνος. αἰεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι.
Ορ. θεοὺς μὲν ἡγοῦ πρῶτον, Ἠλέκτρα, τύχης
ἀρχηγέτας τῆσδ', εἶτα κἄμ' ἐπαίνεσον
τὸν τῶν θεῶν τε τῆς τύχης θ' ὑπηρέτην.
ἥκω γὰρ οὐ λόγοισιν ἀλλ' ἔργοις κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον· ὡς δὲ τῷ σάφ' εἰδέναι τάδε
προσθῶμεν, αὐτὸν τὸν θανόντα σοι φέρω,
ὃν εἴτε χρῄζεις θηρσὶν ἁρπαγὴν πρόθες,
ἢ σκῦλον οἰωνοῖσιν, αἰθέρος τέκνοις,
πήξασ' ἔρεισον σκόλοπι· σὸς γάρ ἐστι νῦν
δοῦλος, πάροιθε δεσπότης κεκλημένος.
Ηλ. αἰσχύνομαι μέν, βούλομαι δ' εἰπεῖν ὅμως.
Ορ. τί χρῆμα; λέξον· ὡς φόβου γ' ἔξωθεν εἶ.
Ηλ. νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν, μή μέ τις φθόνῳ βάλῃ.
Ορ. οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἂν μέμψαιτό σε.
Ηλ. δυσάρεστος ἡμῶν καὶ φιλόψογος πόλις.

876 ἀμετέρας Wecklein ἀμέτεροι L 877 βασιλῆς Seidler –ῆες L (cf. 863) 878 τοὺς Matthiae τούσδ' L ἀδίκως L^{ac} –ους L^{pc} 894–5 ὡς...προσθῶμεν del. Diggle 904 φιλόψογος Victorius –ψυχος L

Chorus. You bring adornments, then, for his head, *[Antistr.*
while our dancing, dear to the Muses, shall go on.[875]
Now shall the former dear kings of our land rule over it
justly, having brought down those who ruled unjustly.
Come, let us shout with the aulos, joyfully.

Orestes and Pylades return by eisodos B with servants carrying Aegisthus's body on a stretcher which they set down in front of the cottage. Electra comes out to meet them carrying wreaths.

Electra. O glorious in victory, Orestes, sprung from a father victorious in the battle under Troy,[881] accept these bindings for the locks of your hair. You come home after racing no idle furlong, but having killed our foe, Aegisthus, who slew your father and mine.[885] And you, his comrade in arms, son of a most loyal father, Pylades, accept a crown from my hand. You too win an equal share with him from the contest. And may I see you both ever prospering.

Orestes. Put the gods first, Electra,[890] as masters of this event; then praise me with them, as servant of the gods and of fortune's power. I have returned, I have killed Aegisthus not in word but in reality. And so that I may add it to your knowing this for certain, I bring you the dead man himself.[895] If you want, set him out as prey for beasts, or fix him impaled on a stake as spoil for birds, heaven's children. For now he is your slave, who before was called your master.

Elec. I feel ashamed, yet still I wish to speak.[900]

Ores. Of what? Speak out. Fear surely no longer restrains you.

Elec. Of abusing the dead, lest someone strike me with envy.

Ores. No one at all would be inclined to blame you.

Elec. Our city, though, is captious and censorious.

Ορ. λέγ' εἴ τι χρῄζεις, σύγγον'· ἀσπόνδοισι γὰρ
νόμοισιν ἔχθραν τῷδε συμβεβλήκαμεν.
Ηλ. εἶέν· τίν' ἀρχὴν πρῶτά σ' ἐξείπω κακῶν,
ποίας τελευτάς; τίνα μέσον τάξω λόγον;
καὶ μὴν δι' ὀρθρων γ' οὔποτ' ἐξελίμπανον
θρυλοῦσ' ἃ γ' εἰπεῖν ἤθελον κατ' ὄμμα σόν,
εἰ δὴ γενοίμην δειμάτων ἐλευθέρα
τῶν πρόσθε. νῦν οὖν ἔσμεν· ἀποδώσω δέ σοι
ἐκεῖν' ἃ σε ζῶντ' ἤθελον λέξαι κακά.
ἀπώλεσάς με κὠρφανὴν φίλου πατρὸς
καὶ τόνδ' ἔθηκας, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος,
κἄγημας αἰσχρῶς μητέρ' ἄνδρα τ' ἔκτανες
στρατηλατοῦνθ' Ἕλλησιν, οὐκ ἐλθὼν Φρύγας.
ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἦλθες ἀμαθίας ὥστ' ἤλπισας
ὡς ἐς σὲ μὲν δὴ μητέρ' οὐχ ἕξοις κακὴν
γήμας, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἠδίκει λέχη.
ἴστω δ', ὅταν τις διολέσας δάμαρτά του
κρυπταῖσιν εὐναῖς εἶτ' ἀναγκασθῇ λαβεῖν,
δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ' οἷ δ' ἔχειν.
ἄλγιστα δ' ᾤκεις, οὐ δοκῶν οἰκεῖν κακῶς·
ἤδησθα γὰρ δῆτ' ἀνόσιον γήμας γάμον,
μήτηρ δὲ σ' ἄνδρα δυσσεβῆ κεκτημένη.
ἄμφω πονηρὼ δ' ὄντ' ἀνῃρεῖσθον τύχην
κείνη τε τὴν σὴν καὶ σὺ τὴν κείνης κακήν.
πᾶσιν δ' ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἤκουες τάδε·
Ὅ τῆς γυναικός, οὐχὶ τἀνδρὸς ἡ γυνή.'
καίτοι τόδ' αἰσχρόν, προστατεῖν γε δωμάτων
γυναῖκα, μὴ τὸν ἄνδρα· κἀκείνους στυγῶ
τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατρὸς
οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει.
ἐπίσημα γὰρ γήμαντι καὶ μείζω λέχη
τἀνδρὸς μὲν οὐδείς, τῶν δὲ θηλειῶν λόγος.

910 ἃ σ' Walberg ὅσ' Herwerden 919 ἕξοις Paley -εις L 920 ἠδίκει Canter -εις L 928 ἀνῃρεῖσθον Walberg ἀφαιρ- L 929 τὴν κείνης κακήν Cropp (928–9 κακὴν... τύχην Herwerden) τοῦ 'κείνης L 932–7 susp. Wecklein (936–7 Hartung)

Ores. Speak on, sister, if you want; our enmity with him allows no truces.[905]

Electra (addressing Aegisthus' corpse).

Well, then; what beginning shall I make to my reviling? What ending? What theme shall I place at the centre? To be sure, though, in the twilight hours I never left off reciting what I wanted to say to your face[910] if I should become free from those former fears. So now I am free and I shall pay you back, reviling you as I longed to while you lived.

You ruined me; you robbed me of a dear father, and Orestes here, though we had done you no wrong.[915] You wedded our mother shamefully and killed her husband, who commanded the Hellenes while you never went to Troy. You reached such depths of crassness that you thought when you married my mother she'd make you a decent wife, even though she was betraying my father's bed![920] A man should know, when he corrupts someone's wife in secret lechery and then is compelled to take her, he's a poor fool if he imagines she didn't keep her virtue in the other marriage but is keeping it with him. No, your life was a torment, though you thought you were living well.[925] You knew, of course, you had made an unholy marriage, and she that in you she had a sinful husband. Both being vicious, you took on each other's evil fortune, she yours and you hers.

And this is what all the Argives said of you:[930] 'The man's his wife's, and not the wife her man's.' This, though, is shameful, a woman in charge of the household and not the man. I despise those children, too, who are known in the city not by their father's name but by their mother's.[935] For if a man makes a notable marriage above his station, the man is of no account beside the woman.

ὃ δ' ἠπάτα σε πλεῖστον οὐκ ἐγνωκότα,
ηὔχεις τις εἶναι τοῖσι χρήμασι σθένων·
τὰ δ' οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ βραχὺν ὁμιλῆσαι χρόνον.
ἡ γὰρ φύσις βέβαιος, οὐ τὰ χρήματα.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ παραμένουσ' αἴρει κακά·
ὁ δ' ὄλβος ἀδίκως καὶ μετὰ σκαιῶν ξυνὼν
ἐξέπτατ' οἴκων, σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον.
ἃ δ' ἐς γυναῖκας, παρθένῳ γὰρ οὐ καλὸν
λέγειν, σιωπῶ, γνωρίμως δ' αἰνίξομαι.
ὕβριζες, ὡς δὴ βασιλικοὺς ἔχων δόμους
κάλλει τ' ἀραρώς. ἀλλ' ἔμοιγ' εἴη πόσις
μὴ παρθενωπὸς ἀλλὰ τἀνδρείου τρόπου.
τὰ γὰρ τέκν' αὐτῶν Ἄρεος ἐκκρεμάννυται,
τὰ δ' εὐπρεπῆ δὴ κόσμος ἐν χοροῖς μόνον.
ἔρρ', οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὧν ἐφευρεθεὶς χρόνῳ
δίκην δέδωκας. ὧδέ τις κακοῦργος ὢν
μή μοι τὸ πρῶτον βῆμ' ἐὰν δράμῃ καλῶς
νικᾶν δοκείτω τὴν Δίκην, πρὶν ἂν πέρας
γραμμῆς ἵκηται καὶ τέλος κάμψῃ βίου.

Χο. ἔπραξε δεινά, δεινὰ δ' ἀντέδωκέ σοι
καὶ τῷδ'· ἔχει γὰρ ἡ Δίκη μέγα σθένος.

Ηλ. εἶἐν· κομίζειν τοῦδε σῶμ' ἔσω χρεὼν
σκότῳ τε δοῦναι, δμῶες, ὡς, ὅταν μόλῃ
μήτηρ, σφαγῆς πάροιθε μὴ 'σίδῃ νεκρόν.

Ορ. ἐπίσχες· ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς ἄλλον λόγον.

Ηλ. τί δ'; ἐκ Μυκηνῶν μῶν βοηδρόμους ὁρᾷς;

Ορ. οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἥ μ' ἐγείνατο.

Ηλ. καλῶς ἄρ' ἄρκυν ἐς μέσην πορεύεται.

941–4 del. Bruhn (942–4 Vitelli); 943–4 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Phoenician Women* in Stobaeus 4.31.99; 944 appended to *Phoen.* 558 in Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Experts* 11.55 943 ἀδίκως Stob. –ος L 944 βραχὺν ὁμιλήσας χρόνον Stob. 952 ὡς Bothe σῶν Radermacher 953–6 cited without ascription in Stobaeus 1.3.18, 954–6 similarly in Orion, *Euripidean Anthology* 15 953 ὥστε τῆς ἐπικουρίας Stob. 955–6 πέρας...τέλος Weil πέλας...τέλος L τέλος...τέλος Stob. τέλος...πέρας Orion 959–66 speakers Camper, reversing L's assignments and giving 965–6 to Electra: see Commentary 960 τε Reiske γε L 961 μὴ 'σίδῃ Scaliger μ' εἰσίδῃ L (μὴ L^{mg}) 962 ἐσβάλωμεν Diggle 963 ὁρᾷς Bothe ὁρῶ L

And here's what deceived you most, though you did not know it: you prided yourself you were someone on the strength of possessions. But those are good for nothing but brief acquaintance.[940] It's nature that is secure, and not possessions. Nature always stands by you, relieving troubles, while wealth that associates unjustly with fools blossoms a brief time and then flits from the house.

As for your dealings with women, that's a subject unseemly for a maiden[945] to mention; so I leave them unspoken but shall make them an easy riddle. You abused them, you with your royal palace and your physical charms. But I prefer a husband who has, not girlish looks, but a manly demeanour. His offspring hold to Ares,[950] while the pretty ones do no more than embellish choruses.

Off with you, then, still ignorant of what has brought your punishment, now that time has found you out. So let any criminal, though he may run the first leg well, not think he is beating Justice till[955] he reaches the finish-line and completes his life's course.

Chorus-leader.

He did dreadful things, and has made a dreadful repayment to you and Orestes. Justice has great strength.

Electra. Well, then: servants, take his body inside and hide it in the shadows. When our mother comes[960] she must not catch sight of the corpse before her slaughter.

(The servants take the body into the cottage, but Orestes is distracted by the approach of Clytemnestra and her entourage.)

Ores. Hold on, here's something else we must attend to.

Elec. What? You don't see reinforcements from Mycenae, I hope?

Ores. No, I see the mother who gave me birth.

Elec. She's making her way nicely, then, right into the net.[965]

Ορ. καὶ μὴν ὄχοις γε καὶ στολῇ λαμπρύνεται.
⟨Ηλ. ⟩
Ορ. τί δῆτα δρῶμεν; μητέρ' ἢ φονεύσομεν;
Ηλ. μῶν σ' οἶκτος εἶλε, μητρὸς ὡς εἶδες δέμας;
Ορ. φεῦ·
πῶς γὰρ κτάνω νιν, ἥ μ' ἔθρεψε κἄτεκεν;
Ηλ. ὥσπερ πατέρα σὸν ἥδε κἀμὸν ὤλεσεν.
Ορ. ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ' ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας.
Ηλ. ὅπου δ' Ἀπόλλων σκαιὸς ᾖ, τίνες σοφοί;
Ορ. ὅστις μ' ἔχρησας μητέρ', ἣν οὐ χρῆν, κτανεῖν.
Ηλ. βλάπτῃ δὲ δὴ τί πατρὶ τιμωρῶν σέθεν;
Ορ. μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ' ἁγνὸς ὤν.
Ηλ. καὶ μή γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβὴς ἔσῃ.
Ορ. ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὶ γ' οὐ φόνου δώσω δίκας;
Ηλ. τί δ' ἦν πατρῴαν διαμεθῇς τιμωρίαν;
Ορ. ἆρ' αὖτ' ἀλάστωρ εἶπ' ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῷ;
Ηλ. ἱερὸν καθίζων τρίποδ'; ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ δοκῶ.
Ορ. οὔ τἂν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε.
Ηλ. οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀνανδρίαν πεσῇ,
ἀλλ' εἶ τὸν αὐτὸν τῇδ' ὑποστήσων δόλον
ᾧ καὶ πόσιν καθεῖλεν †Αἴγισθον κτανών†;
Ορ. ἔσειμι· δεινοῦ δ' ἄρχομαι προβήματος,
καὶ δεινὰ δράσω. θεοισι δ' εἰ δοκεῖ τάδε,
ἔστω· πικρὸν δ' οὐχ ἡδὺ τἀγώνισμά μοι.

966 see above on 959–66 lacuna after 966 Nauck, after 965 Kirchhoff (who in his first edition retained L's order of speakers and placed 966 before 965) 966 γε Schaefer τὲ L 976 μή Tr μήν LP 977 μητρὶ Par. 2888, Ricc. 77 μητρὸς L γ' οὐ F. W. Schmidt, Weil τοῦ L ἐγᾠδα· μητρὸς (or μητρὶ) δ' οὐ Herwerden (ἐγᾠδα μητρὶ...δώσων Musgrave) 978 τί δ' ἦν Nauck (τί δ' ἂν Musgrave, τῷ δ' ἦν Camper) τῶ; δαὶ $L^{sl}P$ τῶ; δ* (δὲ or δὴ?) L διαμεθῇς Barnes -ίης L 980–1 *paragr.* (= Ηλ., Ορ.) P^{rubr} (om. L) 981 οὔ τἂν Hermann οὐδ' ἂν L οὐκ ἂν P 982–4 Ηλ. Weil *paragr.* (= Ηλ., Ορ., Ηλ.) L 982 πεσῇ Elmsley πέσῃς (i.e. -ῃς) L 983 εἶ...ὑποστήσων Weil εἰς...ὑποστήσω L 984 καθεῖλες Tr Αἰγίσθου μέτα Wilamowitz Αἰγίσθου (or -ῳ) χάριν Cropp 985 *paragr.* (= Ορ.) P^{rubr} (om. L) προβήματος Denniston (and accidentally Par. 2714) προβλ- L 986 δράσω. θεοῖσι δ' εἰ Weil δράσω, εἰ θεοῖς L (δράσω γ' TrP) 987 δ' οὐχ ἡδὺ Musgrave δὲ χ' ἡδὺ TrP δὲ καὶ ἡδὺ $L^{?}$ κοὐχ ἡδὺ Diggle

Ores. And look, she's magnificent, with carriage and fine clothing!

Elec. . . . *(a line missing)* . . .

Ores. What, then, shall we do? Shall we really slay our mother?

Elec. You don't mean pity has seized you now you've seen your mother in person?

Ores. Ah, yes; how can I kill her, who nurtured me and bore me?

Elec. The same way she slew your father, and mine too![970]

Ores. O Phoebus, there was much unwisdom in your decree!

Elec. But where Apollo is foolish, who are wise?

Ores. You bade me kill my mother, whom I should not kill.

Elec. But how does that harm you when you avenge your father?

Ores. I'll be exiled as a matricide now, when before I was pure.[975]

Elec. But impious too if you don't defend your father!

Ores. And shall I not pay my mother for shedding her blood?

Elec. And what if you set aside your father's vengeance?

Ores. Perhaps an avenging demon spoke, posing as the god?

Elec. Sitting on the sacred tripod? I don't think so![980]

Ores. I cannot believe this is well prophesied.

Elec. Won't you stop falling so cravenly into cowardice, and go to prepare for her the very same trap with which she destroyed her husband †*killing Aegisthus*†.

Ores. I'll go inside. I'm starting on a dreadful progress,[985] and will do dreadful deeds. If the gods think it right, so be it — but this trial is bitter, not sweet, for me.

Orestes enters the cottage. A carriage enters by eisodos B(?) carrying Clytemnestra and several Trojan slave-women. The Chorus chants a welcome:

Χο. ἰώ,
βασίλεια γύναι χθονὸς Ἀργείας,
παῖ Τυνδάρεω,
καὶ τοῖν ἀγαθοῖν ξύγγονε κούροιν
Διός, οἳ φλογερὰν αἰθέρ' ἐν ἄστροις
ναίουσι, βροτῶν ἐν ἁλὸς ῥοθίοις
τιμὰς σωτῆρας ἔχοντες·
χαῖρε, σεβίζω σ' ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας
πλούτου μεγάλης τ' εὐδαιμονίας.
τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι
καιρός, †ὦ† βασίλεια.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
ἔκβητ' ἀπήνης, Τρῳάδες, χειρὸς δ' ἐμῆς
λάβεσθ', ἵν' ἔξω τοῦδ' ὄχου στήσω πόδα.
σκύλοισι μὲν γὰρ θεῶν κεκόσμηνται δόμοι
Φρυγίοις, ἐγὼ δὲ τάσδε, Τρῳάδος χθονὸς
ἐξαίρετ', ἀντὶ παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα
σμικρὸν γέρας, καλὸν δὲ κέκτημαι δόμοις.
Ηλ. οὔκουν ἐγώ — δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη
δόμων πατρῴων δυστυχεῖς οἰκῶ δόμους —
μῆτερ, λάβωμαι μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερός;
Κλ. δοῦλαι πάρεισιν αἵδε· μὴ σύ μοι πόνει.
Ηλ. τί δ'; αἰχμάλωτόν τοί μ' ἀπῴκισας δόμων,
ἠρημένων δὲ δωμάτων ἠρήμεθα,
ὡς αἵδε, πατρὸς ὀρφανοὶ λελειμμένοι.
Κλ. τοιαῦτα μέντοι σὸς πατὴρ βουλεύματα
ἐς οὓς ἐχρῆν ἥκιστ' ἐβούλευσεν φίλων.
λέξω δέ· καίτοι δόξ' ὅταν λάβῃ κακὴ
γυναῖκα, γλώσσῃ πικρότης ἔνεστί τις,
ὡς μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν, οὐ καλῶς· τὸ πρᾶγμα δὲ
μαθόντας, ἣν μὲν ἀξίως μισεῖν ἔχῃ,
στυγεῖν δίκαιον· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ στυγεῖν;

997 ⟨χαῖρ'⟩ ὦ Nauck ⟨πότνι'⟩ ὦ Diggle 1002 ἀπώλεσα Victorius –σε L 1010 ὀρφανοὶ λελειμμένοι Fix (following Seidler) –αὶ –αι L 1011 βουλεύματα Victorius –εύεται L 1016 μαθόντας Reiske –όντα σ' L ἔχῃ Bothe ἔχης (i.e. –ῃς) L

Chorus. Hail, lady, queen of the Argive land,
daughter of Tyndareus,
sister of Zeus's sons, the noble twins[990]
who dwell in the fiery heaven amongst the stars
and have the office of protecting
mortals in breaking seas.
Greetings! I revere you no less than the blessed gods
for your great wealth and prosperity.[995]
It is proper that your fortunes
receive attention, †*O*† queen.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Get down from the wagon, you Trojan women, and take my hand, so I may step down from this carriage. The houses of the gods, you see, are adorned with Phrygian spoils,[1000] while I have these, the pick of the Trojan land, for my house, a small but choice return for the child I lost.

Elec. May not I, then — seeing that I am a slave, thrown out of my ancestral home and dwelling in a miserable house —[1005] take hold, mother, of your divinely blessed hand?

Clyt. There are slaves here; don't exert yourself for me.

Elec. Why not? You've made me a prisoner, you know, and displaced me from my house. I've seen my home captured and been made captive, as they have, bereft of my father.[1010]

Clyt. Well, that is what your father brought about with his scheming against those who deserved his deepest devotion. I'll tell the story. Mind you, when bad repute takes hold of a woman, people tend to find her speaking offensive. But that in my opinion is not as it should be. They should learn the facts[1015] and then, if hate is called for, it's fair to hate her; but if not, what need is there to hate?

ἡμᾶς δ' ἔδωκε Τυνδάρεως τῷ σῷ πατρὶ
οὐχ ὥστε θνῄσκειν οὐδ' ἃ γειναίμην ἐγώ.
κεῖνος δὲ παῖδα τὴν ἐμὴν Ἀχιλλέως
λέκτροισι πείσας ᾤχετ' ἐκ δόμων ἄγων
πρυμνοῦχον Αὐλιν, ἔνθ' ὑπερτείνας πυρᾶς
λευκὴν διήμησ' Ἰφιγόνης παρηΐδα.
κεἰ μὲν πόλεως ἅλωσιν ἐξιώμενος
ἢ δῶμ' ὀνήσων τἄλλα τ' ἐκσῴζων τέκνα
ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὕπερ, συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν.
νῦν δ' οὕνεχ' Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν ὅ τ' αὖ λαβὼν
ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,
τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.
ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν καίπερ ἠδικημένη
οὐκ ἠγριώμην οὐδ' ἂν ἔκτανον πόσιν.
ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἔχων μοι μαινάδ' ἔνθεον κόρην
λέκτροις τ' ἐπεισέφρηκε, καὶ νύμφα δύο
ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς δώμασιν κατεῖχ' ὁμοῦ.
μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·
ὅταν δ', ὑπόντος τοῦδ', ἁμαρτάνῃ πόσις
τἄνδον παρώσας λέκτρα, μιμεῖσθαι θέλει
γυνὴ τὸν ἄνδρα χἄτερον κτᾶσθαι φίλον.
κἄπειτ' ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ ψόγος λαμπρύνεται,
οἱ δ' αἴτιοι τῶνδ' οὐ κλύουσ' ἄνδρες κακῶς.
εἰ δ' ἐκ δόμων ἥρπαστο Μενέλεως λάθρᾳ,
κτανεῖν μ' Ὀρέστην χρῆν, κασιγνήτης πόσιν
Μενέλαον ὡς σώσαιμι; σὸς δὲ πῶς πατὴρ
ἠνέσχετ' ἂν ταῦτ'; εἶτα τὸν μὲν οὐ θανεῖν
κτείνοντα χρῆν τἄμ', ἐμὲ δὲ πρὸς κείνου παθεῖν;
ἔκτειν', ἐτρέφθην ἥνπερ ἦν πορεύσιμον
πρὸς τοὺς ἐκείνῳ πολεμίους. φίλων γὰρ ἂν
τίς ἂν φόνου σοῦ πατρὸς ἐκοινώνησέ μοι;

1018 δ' ἔδωκε Dawes δέδωκε L 1019 γειναίμην Dawes 'γεινάμην L 1022 πυρᾶς Tyrwhitt πύλας L 1026 συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν Canter -ωστά νιν L 1027 Ἑλένη Heath -ης L 1034 τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς Canter τοῖς αὐτοῖσι L κατεῖχ' ὁμοῦ Dawes κατείχομεν L 1041–5 del. Wilamowitz lacuna after 1045: Diggle 1046 ἧπερ Boissonade 1048 φόνου σοῦ πατρὸς Denniston πατρὸς σοῦ φόνον L

When Tyndareus gave me in marriage to your father, he did not intend that I or the children I bore should die for it.[1019] Yet that man lured my child with a promise of marriage with Achilles, and took her off from our home to the moorings at Aulis; and there he held her stretched above the altar and slashed through Iphigenia's pale white throat. Now if he had been relieving the city from capture, or meaning to profit his house and save his other children,[1025] and so killed one for many, that could have been condoned. But as it was, since Helen was full of lust and her husband didn't know how to punish a treacherous wife — because of that he put my child to death!

Well, in response, although I had been wronged,[1030] I did not turn savage nor would I have killed my husband. But he came back with a raving god-possessed girl, imported her to our bed, and tried to keep two brides together in the same house! Now women are a foolish lot, I don't deny it;[1035] but when, that being the case, a husband errs and rejects his wedded wife, the woman is apt to follow his pattern and take another partner. And then the censure of it makes us notorious, while the men responsible for it don't get a bad name![1040]

Suppose Menelaus had been secretly snatched from home. Should I have killed Orestes to retrieve Menelaus, my sister's husband? How would your father have borne that? Then was it wrong for him to die for killing my child, yet right for me to suffer at his hands?[1045]

I killed him; I took the way that was viable, turning to those who were his enemies. Which of his friends, after all, would have shared with me in murdering your father?

λέγ' εἴ τι χρῄζεις κἀντίθες παρρησίᾳ,
ὅπως τέθνηκε σὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἐνδίκως.
Χο. δίκαι' ἔλεξας, ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχρῶς ἔχει.
γυναῖκα γὰρ χρὴ πάντα συγχωρεῖν πόσει,
ἥτις φρενήρης· ᾗ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ τάδε,
οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἥκει λόγων.
⟨Ηλ.⟩ μέμνησο, μῆτερ, οἷς ἔλεξας ὑστάτους
λόγους, διδοῦσα πρὸς σέ μοι παρρησίαν.
Κλ. καὶ νῦν γέ φημι κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι, τέκνον.
Ηλ. ἆρ' ἂν κλυοῦσα, μῆτερ, εἶτ' ἔρξαις κακῶς;
Κλ. οὔκ, εἴ τι τῇ σῇ γ' ἡδὺ †προσθήσω† φρενί.
Ηλ. λέγοιμ' ἄν· ἀρχὴ δ' ἥδε μοι προοιμίου·
εἶθ' εἶχες, ὦ τεκοῦσα, βελτίους φρένας.
τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἄξιον φέρειν
Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγόνω,
ἄμφω ματαίω Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίω.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἁρπασθεῖσ' ἑκοῦσ' ἀπώλετο,
σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας,
σκῆψιν προτείνουσ' ὡς ὑπὲρ τέκνου πόσιν
ἔκτεινας· οὐ γάρ ⟨σ'⟩ ὡς ἔγωγ' ἴσασιν εὖ.
ἥτις, θυγατρὸς πρὶν κεκυρῶσθαι σφαγάς,
νέον τ' ἀπ' οἴκων ἀνδρὸς ἐξωρμημένου,
ξανθὸν κατόπτρῳ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης.
γυνὴ δ' ἀπόντος ἀνδρὸς ἥτις ἐκ δόμων
ἐς κάλλος ἀσκεῖ, διάγραφ' ὡς οὖσαν κακήν.
οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν δεῖ θύρασιν εὐπρεπὲς
φαίνειν πρόσωπον, ἤν τι μὴ ζητῇ κακόν.
μόνην δὲ πασῶν οἶδ' ἐγὼ σ' Ἑλληνίδων,
εἰ μὲν τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, κεχαρμένην,
εἰ δ' ἥσσον' εἴη, συννέφουσαν ὄμματα,
Ἀγαμέμνον' οὐ χρῄζουσαν ἐκ Τροίας μολεῖν.

1051–4 Χο. Camper (following Jacobs) Ηλ. L 1052 χρὴ Matthiae χρῆν L 1053 ᾗ Reiske εἰ L 1058 ἆρ' ἂν...ἔρξαις Broadhead ἆρα...ἔρξεις L 1059 οὔκ, εἴ τι τῇ σῇ γ' Lloyd-Jones (οὔκ, εἴ τι σῇ τῇδ' Jackson) οὐκ ἔστι, τῇ σῇ δ' L 1062 φέρειν Porson -ει L 1068 ⟨σ'⟩ Dobree 1069 ἥτις Dindorf ἣ τῆς L 1074 θύρασιν Elmsley -αισιν L 1076 μόνην Victorius -η L 1077 τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ Musgrave πατρῶ' ἦν εὐτυχῆ L

Now speak, if you want, and make your rebuttal freely. Show how your father was not justly killed.[1050]

Chorus-leader. There's justice in what you've said, but the justice is shameful. A woman should go along with her husband in everything, if she's sensible; one who does not think so does not even count in my reckonings.

Elec. Keep in mind, mother, those last words of yours,[1055] offering me freedom in addressing you.

Clyt. Yes, I affirm that now too; I do not retract it.

Elec. If you hear ill from me, mother, might you not do me ill?

Clyt. Not if †*I'll be granting*† something pleasing to your mind.

Elec. I'll speak, then, and here's the opening of my introduction:[1060] I wish, mother mine, that you had better sense. Your looks are worthy of procuring praise, both Helen's and yours; but in nature you are two of a kind, both of you reckless and unworthy of Castor. Helen was snatched and ruined willingly,[1065] and you destroyed the noblest man of Greece. Your pretext was that you killed your husband for your child; for people do not know you as well as I do — you, who before your daughter's sacrifice was sanctioned, when your husband had just lately set out from home,[1070] were dressing your hair's auburn locks in front of a mirror. Now if any woman cultivates her beauty while her husband is away from home, strike her off as no good. She has no need to display a pretty face in public unless she is looking for some mischief.[1075]

I know too that you alone of all Greek women were overjoyed if things went well for the Trojans, while if they did worse you would be scowling darkly, not wanting Agamemnon to re-

καίτοι καλῶς γε σωφρονεῖν παρεῖχέ σοι·
ἄνδρ' εἶχες οὐ κακίον' Αἰγίσθου πόσιν,
ὃν Ἑλλὰς αὐτῆς εἵλετο στρατηλάτην·
Ἑλένης δ' ἀδελφῆς τοιάδ' ἐξειργασμένης
ἐξῆν κλέος σοι μέγα λαβεῖν· τὰ γὰρ κακὰ
παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν εἴσοψίν τ' ἔχει.
εἰ δ', ὡς λέγεις, σὴν θυγατέρ' ἔκτεινεν πατήρ,
ἐγὼ τί σ' ἠδίκησ' ἐμός τε σύγγονος;
πῶς οὐ πόσιν κτείνασα πατρῴους δόμους
ἡμῖν προσῆψας, ἀλλ' ἐπηνέγκω λέχει
τἀλλότρια, μισθοῦ τοὺς γάμους ὠνουμένη,
κοὔτ' ἀντιφεύγει παιδὸς ἀντὶ σοῦ πόσις
οὔτ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τέθνηκε, δὶς τόσως ἐμὲ
κτείνας ἀδελφῆς ζῶσαν; εἰ δ' ἀμείψεται
φόνον δικάζων φόνος, ἀποκτενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι.
εἰ γὰρ δίκαι' ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τάδ' ἔνδικα.
[ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ εὐγένειαν εἰσιδὼν
γαμεῖ πονηρὰν μῶρός ἐστι· μικρὰ γὰρ
μεγάλων ἀμείνω σώφρον' ἐν δόμοις λέχη.]
Χο. τύχη γυναικῶν ἐς γάμους. τὰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ,
τὰ δ' οὐ καλῶς πίπτοντα δέρκομαι βροτῶν.
Κλ. ὦ παῖ, πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν ἀεί.
ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ'· οἱ μέν εἰσιν ἀρσένων,
οἱ δ' αὖ φιλοῦσι μητέρας μᾶλλον πατρός.
συγγνώσομαί σοι· καὶ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν
χαίρω τι, τέκνον, τοῖς δεδραμένοις ἐμοί.
οἴμοι τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
ὡς μᾶλλον ἢ χρῆν ἤλασ' εἰς ὀργὴν πόσει.
Ηλ. ὀψὲ στενάζεις, ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἔχεις ἄκη.
πατὴρ μὲν οὖν τέθνηκε· τὸν δ' ἔξω χθονὸς
πῶς οὐ κομίζῃ παῖδ' ἀλητεύοντα σόν;

1088 οὐ...κτείνασα Canter οὖν...κτείνασ' οὐ L 1089 ἐπηνέγκω (Bothe) λέχει Camper ἀπηνέγκω λέχη L 1097–9 del. Hartung (appended to Euripides' *Cretan Women* F 464 in Stobaeus 4.22.122) 1098 πονηρὰν Stob. –ὰ L 1100–1 del. Nauck 1107–8: see after 1131 1110 πόσει Gomperz –ιν L

turn from Troy. And yet you could have got credit for keeping your virtue.[1080] Your husband was no less a man than Aegisthus; all Hellas had chosen him as its commander. And when your sister Helen had committed such crimes, you had the chance to get great glory; for bad deeds are a pattern for good ones and make them conspicuous.[1085]

But granting, as you say, that our father killed your daughter, what wrong have *I* done you, how has my brother harmed you? How is it that when you had killed your husband you did not attach our ancestral home to us, but dowered your bed with property not your own and bought your marriage for a price?[1090] Why is your husband not in exile for exiling your son? Why has he not died in return for my death, when he has killed me, still living, twice as much as my sister? But if this is to be the way, with murder prescribing murder in requital, I will kill you myself, I and your son Orestes, to avenge our father.[1095] For if that was just, then this is just as well.

[Whoever marries a mischievous woman with an eye to her wealth or noble birth is a fool. A humble but virtuous union is better in a home than a great one.]

Chorus-leader. Women's marriages are a matter of luck.[1100] Some human affairs turn out well, some badly, I observe.

Clyt. My child, affection for your father is in your nature. This happens; some children belong to their fathers, while others are more devoted to their mothers. I'll be patient with you; for in fact, my child, I'm not so very glad at what I've done.[1106] Alas, how foolish I was in my planning,[1109] how excessive the anger I nursed against my husband!

Elec. Your moaning comes too late, you've no remedy now. My father is dead; but why not restore your son, who is wandering in exile from our land?

Κλ. δέδοικα· τοὐμὸν δ', οὐχὶ τοὐκείνου σκοπῶ.
πατρὸς γάρ, ὡς λέγουσι, θυμοῦται φόνῳ.
Ηλ. τί δ' αὖ πόσιν σὸν ἄγριον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχεις;
Κλ. τρόποι τοιοῦτοι· καὶ σὺ δ' αὐθάδης ἔφυς.
Ηλ. ἀλγῶ γάρ· ἀλλὰ παύσομαι θυμουμένη.
Κλ. καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνος οὐκέτ' ἔσται σοι βαρύς.
Ηλ. φρονεῖ μέγ'· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ναίει δόμοις.
Κλ. ὁρᾷς; ἀν' αὖ σὺ ζωπυρεῖς νείκη νέα.
Ηλ. σιγῶ· δέδοικα γάρ νιν ὡς δέδοικ' ἐγώ.
Κλ. παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδ'. ἀλλὰ τί μ' ἐκάλεις, τέκνον;
Ηλ. ἤκουσας, οἶμαι, τῶν ἐμῶν λοχευμάτων·
τούτων ὕπερ μοι θῦσον — οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἐγώ —
δεκάτην σελήνην παιδὸς ὡς νομίζεται.
τρίβων γὰρ οὐκ εἶμ', ἄτοκος οὖσ' ἐν τῷ πάρος.
Κλ. ἄλλης τόδ' ἔργον, ἥ σ' ἔλυσεν ἐκ τόκων.
Ηλ. αὐτὴ 'λόχευον κἄτεκον μόνη βρέφος.
Κλ. οὕτως ἀγείτων οἶκος ἵδρυται φίλων;
Ηλ. πένητας οὐδεὶς βούλεται κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
Κλ. σὺ δ' ὧδ' ἄλουτος καὶ δυσείματος χρόα
λεχὼ νεογνῶν ἐκ τόκων πεπαυμένη;
ἀλλ' εἶμι, παιδὸς ἀριθμὸν ὡς τελεσφόρον
θύσω θεοῖσι. σοὶ δ' ὅταν πράξω χάριν
τήνδ', εἶμ' ἐπ' ἀγρὸν οὗ πόσις θυηπολεῖ
Νύμφαισιν. ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ὄχους, ὀπάονες,
φάτναις ἄγοντες πρόσθεθ'· ἡνίκ' ἂν δέ με
δοκῆτε θυσίας τῆσδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θεοῖς,
πάρεστε· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ πόσει δοῦναι χάριν.
Ηλ. χώρει πένητας ἐς δόμους· φρούρει δέ μοι
μή σ' αἰθαλώσῃ πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους.
θύσεις γὰρ οἷα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύη.

1116 δ' αὖ Nauck δ* L δαὶ TrP δὴ Weil 1125 ὕπερ μοι Seidler ὑπέρ μου L 1126 δεκάτην σελήνην Musgrave –η –η (i.e. –ῃ –ῃ) L 1130 ἀγείτων οἶκος Victorius ἀγείτον' οἰκ** L ἀγείτον' οἶκον TrP 1131 cited and ascribed to Euripides' *Electra* in Stobaeus 4.33.4 1107–8 transposed by Weil 1134 ἀγρῶν or ἀγροὺς Diggle 1141 θύῃ Nauck θύειν L

Clyt. I'm afraid; I look to my welfare, not his. He's angry, so they say, at his father's murder.[1115]

Elec. And why let your husband treat me so cruelly?

Clyt. That is his way; you too are self-willed, you know.

Elec. Yes, for I'm in pain; but I'll put an end my anger.

Clyt. And then, I'm sure, he'll no longer be hard on you.

Elec. He's arrogant, living as he does in my house.[1120]

Clyt. You see? You're kindling fresh quarrels again.

Elec. I'll say no more. I fear him as I fear him.

Clyt. Enough of this talk. Now, why were you calling me, my child?

Elec. You've heard, I think, that I have given birth? Please make the tenth-night sacrifice for this, according to custom; I don't know how to myself.[1125] I'm inexperienced, being childless till now.

Clyt. That's someone else's job — the woman's who delivered you.

Elec. I was my own midwife and bore the baby alone.

Clyt. Is your house so isolated from friendly neighbours?[1130]

Elec. No one wants to get poor people as friends.

Clyt. And you, so unwashed, with such poor clothes to your body,[1107] when you're confined and recovering from a recent birth?[1108] I'll go, then, and make the sacrifice to the gods for the child's completed term.[1132] And when I've done you this favour, I'll go to the meadow where my husband is sacrificing to the Nymphs. Come, servants, take the mules[1135] and put them to the feed-stalls. Come back when you think I'm finished with this sacrifice to the gods. For I must give satisfaction to my husband as well.

The slaves take away the carriage by eisodos A. Electra lingers as her mother moves towards the cottage door.

Elec. Go on into this poor house — and pray take care that the soot that smothers the building doesn't soil your clothes.[1140] That way you'll make the sacrifice you should to the gods.

Clytemnestra enters the cottage. Electra continues:

κανοῦν δ' ἐνῆρκται καὶ τεθηγμένη σφαγίς,
ἥπερ καθεῖλε ταῦρον, οὗ πέλας πεσὴ
πληγεῖσα· νυμφεύσῃ δὲ κἀν Ἅιδου δόμοις
ᾧπερ ξυνηῦδες ἐν φάει. τοσήνδ' ἐγὼ
δώσω χάριν σοι, σὺ δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ πατρός.

Χο. ἀμοιβαὶ κακῶν· μετάτροποι πνέου- [στρ.
σιν αὖραι δόμων. τότε μὲν ⟨ἐν⟩ λουτροῖς
ἔπεσεν ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ἀρχέτας,
ἰάχησε δὲ στέγα λάϊνοί
τε θριγκοὶ δόμων, τάδ' ἐνέποντος· "Ὦ
σχέτλιε, τί με, γύναι, φονεύεις φίλαν
πατρίδα δεκέτεσι
σποραῖσιν ἐλθόντ' ἐμάν;'
⟨⏑ – – ⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ –
⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑⏑ – ⏑ –⟩

παλίρρους δὲ τάνδ' ὑπάγεται δίκα [ἀντ
διαδρόμου λέχους, μέλεον ἃ πόσιν
χρόνιον ἱκόμενον εἰς οἴκους
Κυκλώπειά τ' οὐράνια τείχε' ὀ-
ξυθήκτῳ †βέλους ἔκανεν† αὐτόχειρ,
πέλεκυν ἐν χεροῖν λαβοῦσ'. ὦ τλάμων
πόσις, ὅτι ποτὲ τὰν
τάλαιναν ἔσχεν κακόν.
ὀρεία τις ὡς λέαιν' ὀργάδων
δρύοχα νεμομένα τάδε κατήνυσεν.

Κλ. (ἔσωθεν)
ὦ τέκνα, πρὸς θεῶν, μὴ κτάνητε μητέρα.
Χο. κλύεις ὑπώροφον βοάν;
Κλ. ἰώ μοί μοι.

1146 δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ Bothe δ' ἐμοὶ δίκην L 1148 ⟨ἐν⟩ Seidler 1152 σχέτλιε Diggle -ία L φονεύεις Victorius φονεύσεις L 1153 δεκέτεσιν Tr δεκέταισιν ἐν ⟨L⟩P 1154 lacuna following (cf. 1163–4) Tr 1155 δίκα Victorius -αν L 1157 ἐς δόμους Heimsoeth ἑστίαν Page 1159 βέλους ἔκανεν ⟨L⟩P βέλει κάν' Tr βέλει ⟨κατ⟩έκαν' Bothe 1160 λαβοῦσ'. ὦ Fix (ᾗ Seidler) λαβοῦσα L

The basket is prepared, the knife is sharpened, the one that killed the bull whom you'll lie beside when you're struck down. You'll be wedded in Hades too with the man you slept with in this world. That much[1145] I'll give you as a favour — and you will give me justice for my father.

Electra follows her mother into the cottage. The Chorus sings alone:

Chorus. Evils are being repaid; the winds of the house's fortune *[Strophe*
are shifting. Then it was my ruler,
mine, falling as he was bathed.
The roof of the house cried out,[1150]
and its stone cornice, as he exclaimed: 'O
hard woman, why do you slay me,
now come after ten years' seed-times
to my dear homeland.'
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Justice's tide flows back and brings her to judgment *[Antistr.*
for her wayward union. Her hapless husband[1156]
returned at last to his home,
to the towering Cyclopean walls, and she
with keen-edged †*weapon's*† killed him herself,
taking an axe in her hands. Ah poor[1160]
husband, whatever the evil
that gripped this ruthless woman.
Like some mountain-lioness prowling
through meadowland thickets she brought this to pass.

Clytemnestra (within)

O children, by the gods I beg you, do not kill your mother![1165]

Cho. Do you hear a shout within?

Clyt. Ay me, me.

Χο. ᾤμωξα κἀγὼ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης.
νέμει τοι δίκαν θεός, ὅταν τύχῃ.
σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ' εἰργάσω,
τάλαιν', εὐνέταν.

ἀλλ' οἵδε μητρὸς νεοφόνοις ἐν αἵμασιν
πεφυρμένοι βαίνουσιν ἐξ οἴκων πόδα
⟨ ⟩
τροπαῖα, δείγματ' ἀθλίων προσφαγμάτων.
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος
τῶν Ταντα λείων οὐδ' ἔφυ ποτ' ἐκγόνων.

Ορ. ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα [*στρ. α*
βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ' ἔργα φόνι-
α μυσαρά, δίγονα σώματ' ἐν
†χθονὶ κείμενα πλαγᾷ†
χερὸς ὕπ' ἐμᾶς, ἄποιν' ἐμῶν
πημάτων ⟨ ∪ – ∪ –
∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –
– ∪ – ∪ – –⟩

Ηλ. δακρύτ' ἄγαν, ὦ σύγγον', αἰτία δ' ἐγώ.
διὰ πυρὸς ἔμολον ἁ τάλαινα ματρὶ τᾷδ',
ἅ μ' ἔτικτε κούραν.

⟨Χο.⟩ ἰὼ τύχας †σᾶς τύχας†
μᾶτερ τεκοῦσ' ⟨ ∪ – –⟩
ἄλαστα μέλεα καὶ πέρα
παθοῦσα σῶν τέκνων ὑπαί.
πατρὸς δ' ἔτεισας φόνον δικαίως.

1173 lacuna following: Paley 1174 τροπαῖα Reiske τρόπαια L προσφαγμάτων Musgrave προσφθεγμάτων L 1180 χθονὶ κεχυμένα πλαγᾷ ⟨διπλᾷ⟩ Diggle 1181 lacuna after πημάτων (cf. 1195–7) Seidler 1185 ⟨Χο.⟩ Kirchhoff (cf. 1201) σ⟨κληρ⟩ᾶς (or σ⟨τερρ⟩ᾶς or σ⟨τυγν⟩ᾶς) τύχας Diggle τύχας σᾶς δυστυχοῦς Hutchinson 1186 ⟨ἄλαστα⟩ Grotefend (cf. 1202)

Cho. I too cry for her as her children overpower her.
(chanting)
Assuredly god dispenses justice, soon or late.
What you've suffered is hard, yet what you did was unholy,[1170]
ruthless woman, to your consort.

Orestes, Electra and Pylades come out of the cottage. The bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are displayed in the doorway.

Chorus-leader. But here they are, fouled with their mother's new-shed blood, coming out from the house . . . *(a line missing)* . . . trophies, tokens of grievous slaughters. There is no house, nor has there ever been, more troubled than the family of Tantalus.[1176]

Orestes and Electra sing their grief, the Chorus responds:

Orestes. Alas, Earth and Zeus who sees all *[Strophe 1*
amongst men, look on these bloody,
defiling deeds, two bodies side by side,
†*lying on the ground through a stroke*†[1180]
from my own hand, in reprisal for my
pains . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Electra. Lamentable indeed, my brother; and I am to blame.
I burned with ruthless hatred for my mother here
who gave me, her daughter, birth.

Chorus. Alas for the fortune, †*your fortune*†,[1185]
mother who bore . . . . . .
suffering grievous miseries and more
at your own children's hands.
Yet you have atoned for their father's murder justly.

Ορ. ἰὼ Φοῖβ', ἀνύμνησας δίκαι' [*ἀντ. α*
ἄφαντα, φανερὰ δ' ἐξέπρα-
ξας ἄχεα, φόνια δ' ὥπασας
λάχε' ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἑλλανίδος.
τίνα δ' ἑτέραν μόλω πόλιν;
τίς ξένος, τίς εὐσεβὴς
ἐμὸν κάρα προσόψεται
ματέρα κτανόντος;
Ηλ. ἰὼ ἰώ μοι. ποῖ δ' ἐγώ, τίν' ἐς χορόν,
τίνα γάμον εἶμι; τίς πόσις με δέξεται
νυμφικὰς ἐς εὐνάς;
Χο. πάλιν πάλιν φρόνημα σὸν
μετεστάθη πρὸς αὔραν·
φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότ' οὐ
φρονοῦσα, δεινὰ δ' εἰργάσω,
φίλα, κασίγνητον οὐ θέλοντα.

⟨Ορ.⟩ κατεῖδες οἷον ἀ τάλαιν' ἔξω πέπλων [*στρ. β*
ἔβαλεν ἔδειξε μαστὸν ἐν φοναῖσιν,
ἰώ μοι, πρὸς πέδῳ
τιθεῖσα γόνιμα μέλεα; τακόμαν δ' ἐγώ.
Χο. σάφ' οἶδα· δι' ὀδύνας ἔβας,
ἰήϊον κλύων γόον
ματρὸς ἅ σ' ἔτικτεν.

Ορ. βοὰν δ' ἔλασκε τάνδε, πρὸς γένυν ἐμὰν [*ἀντ. β*
τιθεῖσα χεῖρα· 'Τέκος ἐμόν, λιταίνω.'
παρῄδων τ' ἐξ ἐμᾶν
ἐκρίμναθ', ὥστε χέρας ἐμὰς λιπεῖν βέλος.
Χο. τάλαινα. πῶς ⟨δ'⟩ ἔτλας φόνον
δι' ὀμμάτων ἰδεῖν σέθεν
ματρὸς ἐκπνεούσας;

1190 δίκαι' Murray δίκαν L 1191 ἄφαντα Elmsley ἄφατα L ἐξέπραξας Tr and perhaps L^{sl} –ω ⟨L⟩P 1193 λάχε' Weil λέχε' TrP λεχέ' L γᾶς Tr γᾶς τᾶς ⟨L⟩P 1198 ἰὼ ἰώ μοι Tr ἰὼ μοι μοι <L>P χορὸν Tr χῶρον LP 1201 Χο. Camper Ορ. L 1206 ⟨Ορ.⟩ Tr ἔξω Bothe ἐῶν L 1209 τακόμαν Seidler τὰν κόμαν L 1210 Χο. Kirchhoff (cf. 1218) Ηλ. L 1215 χεῖρα Seidler χέρας TrP (L unclear) 1218 ⟨δ'⟩ Weil

Orestes. Alas, Phoebus: obscure the justice you intoned, *[Antistr. 1*
but evident the pains you brought to pass.
You have bestowed on me
a murderer's lot, exiled from the land of Hellas.
What other city can I go to?
What host, what righteous man
will look upon my face
when I have killed my mother?

Electra. Ah, ah me. And where shall I go, what dance,
what wedding shall I join? What husband will accept me
into his marriage-bed?

Chorus. Back, back has your thinking
swung, as the wind shifts.
Now it is pure, but then
it was unholy, and you wrought dreadful things,
dear friend, on your reluctant brother.

Orestes. Did you see how the poor woman as we slew her *[Strophe 2*
thrust her breast from her robes and showed it,
ah me, pressing to the ground
the limbs that bore us? My strength melted away.

Chorus. I know it well; you went through anguish,
hearing the wailing cry
of the mother who gave you birth.

Orestes. She put her hand to my face and screamed *[Antistrophe 2*
aloud, 'My child, I beseech you'.
She clung to my cheeks,
so that my sword dropped from my hand.

Chorus. Poor woman! But how could you bear
to set your eyes upon your mother
as she bled and breathed her last?

Ορ. ἐγὼ μὲν ἐπιβαλὼν φάρη κόραις ἐμαῖς [*στρ. γ*
φασγάνῳ κατηρξάμαν
ματέρος ἔσω δέρας μεθείς.
Ηλ. ἐγὼ δέ ⟨γ'⟩ ἐπεκέλευσά σοι
ξίφους τ' ἐφηψάμαν ἅμα. 1225
Χο. δεινότατον παθέων ἔρεξας.

⟨Ορ.⟩ λαβοῦ, κάλυπτε μέλεα ματέρος πέπλοις [*ἀντ. γ*
⟨καὶ⟩ καθάρμοσον σφαγάς.
φονέας ἔτικτες ἆρά σοι.
Ηλ. ἰδού, φίλᾳ τε κοὐ φίλᾳ 1230
φάρεα τάδ' ἀμφιβάλλομεν,
⟨Χο.⟩ τέρμα κακῶν μεγάλων δόμοισιν.

ἀλλ' οἵδε δόμων ὑπὲρ ἀκροτάτων
βαίνουσί τινες δαίμονες ἢ θεῶν
τῶν οὐρανίων· οὐ γὰρ θνητῶν γ' 1235
ἥδε κέλευθος. τί ποτ' ἐς φανερὰν
ὄψιν βαίνουσι βροτοῖσιν;

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, κλῦθι· δίπτυχοι δέ σε
καλοῦσι μητρὸς σύγγονοι Διόσκοροι,
Κάστωρ κασίγνητός τε Πολυδεύκης ὅδε. 1240
δεινὸν δὲ ναυσὶν ἀρτίως πόντου σάλον
παύσαντ' ἀφίγμεθ' Ἄργος, ὡς ἐσείδομεν
σφαγὰς ἀδελφῆς τῆσδε, μητέρος δὲ σῆς.
δίκαια μέν νυν ἥδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾷς.
Φοῖβος δέ, Φοῖβος — ἀλλ' ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός, 1245
σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά.
αἰνεῖν δ' ἀνάγκη ταῦτα· τἀντεῦθεν δὲ χρὴ
πράσσειν ἃ Μοῖρα Ζεύς τ' ἔκρανε σοῦ πέρι.

1221 κόραις p κόμαις L 1224 δέ ⟨γ'⟩ ἐπεκέλευσα Tr δ' ἐπ- LP 1226 assigned to El. with 1224–5 (then perhaps ἔρεξα): Seidler (cf. 1232) 1227 ⟨Ορ.⟩ Seidler 1228 ⟨καὶ⟩ Seidler 1231 τάδ' Kirchhoff γ' L 1232 ⟨Χο.⟩ Kirchhoff (cf. 1226) 1234 βαίνουσι Hartung φαίν- L 1238 ΚΑΣΤΩΡ Bothe διόσκουροι L 1241 ναυσὶν Barnes ναὸς L ναύταις Reiske 1242 ἐσείδομεν Victorius εἴδομεν L 1245 δὲ Victorius τε L

Orestes. I threw my cloak about my eyes *[Strophe 3*
and began the sacrifice with my sword,
thrusting it into my mother's throat.

Electra. And I urged you on
and grasped the sword with you.[1225]

Chorus. You wrought the most terrible of sufferings.

Orestes. Take this robe and cover our mother's limbs, *[Antistr. 3*
close up the wounds.
So you bore children to be your murderers!

Electra. Look, with this mantle I shroud her,[1230]
dear and not dear at once,

Chorus. The end of great troubles for your house.

Castor and Polydeuces fly into view, suspended on the theatrical crane above the stage-building. The Chorus chants an introduction:

Chorus. But here above the house's height
come some spirits or heavenly gods;
for this is not a mortals' path.[1235]
Why are they coming
into the open sight of men?

The gods alight on the roof of the building. Castor speaks:

CASTOR

Son of Agamemnon, listen; we call on you, twin sons of Zeus and brothers to your mother, I Castor and here with me Polydeuces.[1240] We have just now ended a ship-threatening tempest and have come to Argos as we observed the slaughter of our sister here, your mother. Her punishment is just, but not your deed. And Phoebus, Phoebus — but he is my lord,[1245] so I keep silent: wise though he is, he did not instruct you wisely. That you must accept, and now you must carry out what follows as Destiny and Zeus have sanctioned it for you.

Πυλάδῃ μὲν Ἠλέκτραν δὸς ἄλοχον ἐς δόμους,
σὺ δ' Ἄργος ἔκλιπ'· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σοὶ πόλιν
τήνδ' ἐμβατεύειν, μητέρα κτείναντα σήν.
δειναὶ δὲ Κῆρές ⟨σ'⟩ αἱ κυνώπιδες θεαὶ
τροχηλατήσουσ' ἐμμανῆ πλανώμενον.
ἐλθὼν δ' Ἀθήνας Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας
πρόσπτυξον· εἴρξει γάρ νιν ἐπτοημένας
δεινοῖς δράκουσιν ὥστε μὴ ψαύειν σέθεν,
γοργῶφ' ὑπερτείνουσα σῷ κάρᾳ κύκλον.
ἔστιν δ' Ἄρεώς τις ὄχθος, οὗ πρῶτον θεοὶ
ἔζοντ' ἐπὶ ψήφοισιν αἵματος πέρι,
Ἁλιρρόθιον ὅτ' ἔκταν' ὠμόφρων Ἄρης,
μῆνιν θυγατρὸς ἀνοσίων νυμφευμάτων,
πόντου κρέοντος παῖδ', ἵν' εὐσεβεστάτη
ψήφου βεβαία τ' ἐστὶν ἐκ τούτου θέσις.
ἐνταῦθα καὶ σὲ δεῖ δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι.
ἴσαι δέ σ' ἐκσώσουσι μὴ θανεῖν δίκῃ
ψῆφοι τεθεῖσαι· Λοξίας γὰρ αἰτίαν
ἐς αὐτὸν οἴσει, μητέρος χρήσας φόνον.
καὶ τοῖσι λοιποῖς ὅδε νόμος τεθήσεται,
νικᾶν ἴσαις ψήφοισι τὸν φεύγοντ' ἀεί.
δειναὶ μὲν οὖν θεαὶ τῷδ' ἄχει πεπληγμέναι
πάγον παρ' αὐτὸν χάσμα δύσονται χθονός,
σεμνὸν βροτοῖσιν εὐσεβέσι χρηστήριον.
σὲ δ' Ἀρκάδων χρὴ πόλιν ἐπ' Ἀλφειοῦ ῥοαῖς
οἰκεῖν Λυκαίου πλησίον σηκώματος·
ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται.
σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον. τόνδε δ' Αἰγίσθου νέκυν
Ἄργους πολῖται γῆς καλύψουσιν τάφῳ.
μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν ἄρτι Ναυπλίαν παρὼν
Μενέλαος, ἐξ οὗ Τρωϊκὴν εἶλε χθόνα,
Ἑλένη τε θάψει· Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων
ἥκει λιποῦσ' Αἴγυπτον οὐδ' ἦλθεν Φρύγας·

1252 ⟨σ'⟩ Dindorf 1257 σῷ Elmsley σου L 1263 ψήφου...θέσις Tucker ψῆφος... θεοῖς L ψῆφος...βροτοῖς Kirchhoff ἐκ τούτου Pierson ἔκ τε τοῦ L 1265 ἐκσώσουσι Porson ἐκσώζ- L 1267 αὐτὸν Victorius ταυτὸν L 1271 χάσμα Victorius φάσμα L 1272 εὐσεβέσι Clarke -βὲς L

Give Electra to Pylades as wife for his house; and you, leave Argos — you cannot set foot in this city after killing your mother.[1251] The dreadful Kêres, hound-faced deities, will drive you wheeling and wandering in frenzy. But go to Athens and embrace the sacred image of Pallas; she will ward them off, as they seethe[1255] with their dreadful serpents, so that they cannot touch you, holding out her gorgon-faced aegis over your head.

There is a hill of Ares, where the gods first sat to cast votes in a case of bloodshed, when cruel-hearted Ares killed Halirrothius,[1260] son of the sea's ruler, in wrath at his unholy union with his daughter. There since that time votes have been cast most scrupulously and surely. And there you too must face trial for murder. Votes equally cast in due process will save you from death;[1265] for Loxias will take the blame on himself, since he decreed your mother's murder. And this law will be laid down for men thereafter, that with equal votes the defendant shall always prevail.

And so the dreadful goddesses, stricken by this anguish,[1270] will sink into a chasm right by the hill, which will become a venerable oracle for reverent men. But you must settle an Arcadian city by Alpheus' streams, near the Lycaean sanctuary; and that city will be named for you.[1275]

Those are my instructions to you. Aegisthus' body here will be buried by the people of Argos. As for your mother, Menelaus has just now reached Nauplia, long after conquering the land of Troy. He and Helen will bury her; for Helen too has returned[1280] from the house of Proteus in Egypt. She never went to Phrygia,

Ζεὺς δ', ὡς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,
εἴδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον.
Πυλάδης μὲν οὖν κόρην τε καὶ δάμαρτ' ἔχων
Ἀχαιΐδος γῆς οἴκαδ' ἐκπορευέτω,
καὶ τὸν λόγῳ σὸν πενθερὸν κομιζέτω
Φωκέων ἐς αἶαν καὶ δότω πλούτου βάθος.
σὺ δ' Ἰσθμίας γῆς αὐχέν' ἐμβαίνων ποδὶ
χώρει πρὸς ὄχθον Κεκροπίας εὐδαίμονα.
πεπρωμένην γὰρ μοῖραν ἐκπλήσας φόνου
εὐδαιμονήσεις τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαχθεὶς πόνων.

Ορ. ὦ παῖδε Διός, θέμις ἐς φθογγὰς
τὰς ὑμετέρας ἡμῖν πελάθειν;
Κα. θέμις, οὐ μυσαροῖς τοῖσδε σφαγίοις.
Ηλ. κἀμοὶ μύθου μέτα, Τυνδαρίδαι;
⟨Κα.⟩ καὶ σοί· Φοίβῳ τήνδ' ἀναθήσω
πρᾶξιν φονίαν.
Ορ. πῶς ὄντε θεὼ τῆσδέ τ' ἀδελφὼ
τῆς καπφθιμένης
οὐκ ἠρκέσατον Κῆρας μελάθροις;
Κα. Μοῖρά σ' Ἀνάγκη τ' ἦγ' ἐς τὸ χρεὼν
Φοίβου τ' ἄσοφοι γλώσσης ἐνοπαί.
⟨Ηλ.⟩ τίς δ' ἔμ' Ἀπόλλων, ποῖοι χρησμοὶ
φονίαν ἔδοσαν μητρὶ γενέσθαι;
Κα. κοιναὶ πράξεις, κοινοὶ δὲ πότμοι,
μία δ' ἀμφοτέρους
ἄτη πατέρων διέκναισεν.
Ορ. ὦ σύγγονέ μοι, χρονίαν σ' ἐσιδὼν
τῶν σῶν εὐθὺς φίλτρων στέρομαι
καὶ σ' ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος.

1285 ἐκπορευέτω Reiske εἰς– L 1287 βάθος Herwerden βάρος L 1289 ὄχθον Valckenaer οἶκον L 1294 etc. Κα. Bothe διόσκοροι L 1296 ⟨διόσκορ.⟩ P^{rubr} (om. L) 1298 Ορ. Steidle (*paragr.* L) 1299 καπφθιμένης Elmsley καταφθ– L 1301 Μοῖρά σ' Ἀνάγκη τ' Cropp μοίρας ἀνάγκης L μοῖρά τ' ἀνάγκης Bothe μοῖραν ἀνάγκης Seidler μοῖρά σ' ἀνάγκης Tucker μοῖρά τ' ἀνάγκη τ' Diggle μοῖραν ἀνάγκη τ' Donzelli ἦγ' ἐς τὸ Tucker ἠγεῖτο L ἦγεν τὸ Seidler 1303 ⟨Ηλ.⟩ Victorius (om. L, *paragr.* P^{rubr}) τίς δ' ἔμ' Bothe τί δαί μ' L 1305 Διοσκ. Victorius (*paragr.* L)

but Zeus, wanting to cause strife and bloodshed amongst men, dispatched a phantom of Helen to Ilium.

So then, let Pylades take his virgin wife and carry her out of Achaea to his home;[1285] and let him take your brother-in-law in name to Phocis and give him an abundance of wealth. And you, make your way across the Isthmian narrow toward that happy hill in Cecrops' land. Once you have fulfilled your destined lot of murder,[1290] you will find happiness and respite from these troubles.

Orestes and Electra address the twin gods in a chanted exchange:

Ores. Sons of Zeus, is it lawful for me
to approach and converse with you?
Cast. Lawful it is, for you are not defiled by this slaughter.
Elec. May I too share in speaking, sons of Tyndareus?[1295]
Cast. You also; to Phoebus I shall ascribe
this act of bloodshed.
Ores. How, being gods and brothers to her
who has perished here,
did you not fend off the Keres from the house?[1300]
Cast. Destiny and Necessity led you to what must be,
along with Phoebus's unwise proclamations.
Elec. But what Apollo, what decrees ordained
that I should shed my mother's blood?
Cast. Your actions were shared, your destinies shared.[1305]
A single inherited doom
has ground down both of you.
Ores. O my sister, after seeing you at last,
at once I am robbed of your affections.
I shall leave you and shall be left by you.[1310]

Κα. πόσις ἔστ' αὐτῇ καὶ δόμος· οὐχ ἥδ'
οἰκτρὰ πέπονθεν, πλὴν ὅτι λείπει
πόλιν Ἀργείων.
Ηλ. καὶ τίνες ἄλλαι στοναχαὶ μείζους
ἢ γῆς πατρίας ὅρον ἐκλείπειν;
⟨Ορ.⟩ ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οἴκων ἔξειμι πατρὸς
καὶ ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίαις ψήφοισι φόνον
μητρὸς ὑφέξω.
Κα. ὁσίαν, θάρσει, Παλλάδος ἥξεις
πόλιν· ἀλλ' ἀνέχου.
Ηλ. περί μοι στέρνοις στέρνα πρόσαψον,
σύγγονε φίλτατε·
διὰ γὰρ ζευγνῦσ' ἡμᾶς πατρίων
μελάθρων μητρὸς φόνιοι κατάραι.
Ορ. βάλε, πρόσπτυξον σῶμα· θανόντος δ'
ὡς ἐπὶ τύμβῳ καταθρήνησον.
Κα. φεῦ φεῦ· δεινὸν τόδ' ἐγηρύσω
καὶ θεοῖσι κλύειν.
ἔνι γὰρ κἀμοὶ τοῖς τ' οὐρανίδαις
οἶκτος θνητῶν πολυμόχθων.
⟨Ορ.⟩ οὐκέτι σ' ὄψομαι.
Ηλ. οὐδ' ἐγὼ ἐς σὸν βλέφαρον πελάσω.
Ορ. τάδε λοίσθιά μοι προσφθέγματά σου.
Ηλ. ὦ χαῖρε, πόλις·
χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πολλά, πολίτιδες.
Ορ. ὦ πιστοτάτη, στείχεις ἤδη;
Ηλ. στείχω βλέφαρον τέγγουσ' ἀπαλόν.
⟨Ορ.⟩ Πυλάδη, χαίρων ἴθι, νυμφεύου
δέμας Ἠλέκτρας.

1314 Ηλ., then 1316 ⟨Ορ.⟩ Bothe Ορ. L 1319 word-order Weil (θάρσ– Παλλ– ἥξ– ὁσ– Monk) θάρσει Παλλάδος ὁσίαν ἥξεις L 1327 Διοσκ. Victorius Ηλ. L 1330 οἶκτος Diggle –οι L 1331 ⟨Ορ.⟩ TrP^{rubr} (om. L) 1332 Ηλ. TrP^{rubr} (*paragr.* L) 1333, 1334, 1336, 1337 *paragraphi* L (there are no lines numbered 1338–39) 1340 ⟨Ορ.⟩ P^{rubr} (om. L)

Cast. She has a husband and a home. Her suffering
is not so lamentable, except that she is leaving
the Argives' city.

Elec. And what other griefs are greater
than to leave the confines of one's ancestral land?[1315]

Ores. But as for me, I shall go from my father's house
and submit the shedding of my mother's blood
to trial by foreigners' votes.

Cast. Have courage; you will find the city of Pallas
is god-fearing. Come, bear up.[1320]

Elec. Clasp breast to breast with me,
my dearest brother.
Our mother's murderous curses are parting us
from our ancestral home.

Ores. Throw yourself on me, embrace me; sing me a dirge,
as though I were dead and you were at my tomb.[1326]

(They embrace.)

Cast. Ah, ah! This cry of yours is dreadful
even for gods to hear.
I too and the heavenly ones can pity
poor mortals with their many sufferings.[1330]

Ores. I shall see you no longer.

Elec. And I shall come no longer into your sight.

Ores. These are my last words addressed to you.

(Electra releases Orestes and prepares to leave with Pylades.)

Elec. Farewell, city!
A fond farewell to you, my fellow-women![1335]

Ores. Most loyal sister, are you going already?

Elec. I am going; my soft face is damp with tears.

Ores. Farewell, Pylades; make Electra[1340]
your wedded bride.

Pylades, Electra and servants leave by eisodos B. Castor addresses Orestes:

⟨Κα.⟩ τοῖσδε μελήσει γάμος. ἀλλὰ κύνας
τάσδ' ὑποφεύγων στεῖχ' ἐπ' Ἀθηνῶν·
δεινὸν γὰρ ἴχνος βάλλουσ' ἐπὶ σοὶ
χειροδράκοντες, χρῶτα κελαιναί,
δεινῶν ὀδυνῶν καρπὸν ἔχουσαι.
νὼ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον Σικελὸν σπουδῇ
σώσοντε νεῶν πρῴρας ἐνάλους.
διὰ δ' αἰθερίας στείχοντε πλακὸς
τοῖς μὲν μυσαροῖς οὐκ ἐπαρήγομεν,
οἷσιν δ' ὅσιον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
φίλον ἐν βιότῳ, τούτους χαλεπῶν
ἐκλύοντες μόχθων σῴζομεν.
οὕτως ἀδικεῖν μηδεὶς θελέτω
μηδ' ἐπιόρκων μέτα συμπλείτω·
θεὸς ὢν θνητοῖς ἀγορεύω.

Χο. χαίρετε· χαίρειν δ' ὅστις δύναται
καὶ ξυντυχίᾳ μή τινι κάμνει
θνητῶν εὐδαίμονα πράσσει.

1342 ⟨Διοσ.⟩ Tr (om. L) 1348 ἐνάλους Scaliger ἐναύλ– L

Cast. These two will see to their marriage. But the hounds
are here; flee before them and make for Athens.
With their dreadful coursing they now assail you,
serpent-armed and dark of skin,[1345]
bearing their yield of dreadful pains.
And we shall make haste for the Sicilian sea
to rescue sea-borne vessels' prows.
And as we travel through the ethereal plain
we do not succour those who are defiled,[1350]
but those who hold to what is holy
and right in life we do protect,
releasing them from oppressive toils.
So let none willingly do wrong,
nor share his voyage with perjured men;[1355]
so much do I, a god, declare to mortals.

Castor and Polydeuces fly on their way. Orestes flees alone by eisodos B.

Chorus. Farewell — but the mortal who can fare well,
not suffering any adversity,
is fortunate indeed.

The bodies are withdrawn into the cottage. The Chorus leaves by eisodos A.

COMMENTARY

For abbreviations and references see pp. 245ff. Square brackets enclose technical discussions of text and language. »» indicates supplementary readings which usually provide further bibliography.

Hypothesis (narrative summary)

This papyrus fragment from the 3rd century A.D, published in 1903, contains a summary of the plot from lines 357 to 600. It probably comes from a collection now known as 'Tales from Euripides' which contained summaries of the stories told in Euripides' plays. Such summaries are known from many papyri and seem to have been widely used as a source for mythological and rhetorical handbooks. Abbreviated versions appear in the medieval manuscripts of many of the extant plays (not including *Electra*). »» Collard–Cropp 2008a.xv–xvii, van Rossum-Steenbeek 1998.

1–111. Opening scenes

1–53 Prologue speech (Peasant), 54–81 Dialogue of Electra and Peasant, 82–111 Speech of Orestes (with Pylades).

These carefully crafted vignettes, together with Electra's monody and the parodos, establish the situation and main characters. Each element is simple in itself, and the introductory techniques are regular in Euripides, but together they make an unusually varied introductory sequence. The elaboration serves partly to expound a situation unfamiliar and surprising to the audience, partly to establish Electra and Orestes separately, and partly to define the material, moral and emotional aspects of Electra's situation. Exposition is a primary function of Euripides' introductory sequences (his myths were often abstruse or, as here, unorthodox), but they also have a broader function, conditioning the audience's expectations, sympathies and perception of the characters' motivations.

Scene. Just before dawn (54, 78 etc.) in the cultivated uplands of the Argolid and close to a border (96 etc.), probably with Arcadia (1 n.). The Peasant's cottage is the stage building *(skênê)*, with a single central door and a statue and altar of Apollo *aguieus* to one side (215–99 n.). The identity and circumstances of the Peasant are not revealed until 34ff., and the location not until 96, so the audience's attention is drawn to these novel details (on such techniques in Euripides see Arnott 1973, 1978, 1983). Euripides has moved the story from its traditional palace setting to a milieu of ordinary people (Peasant, Old Man, Chorus; cf. Introduction, pp. 16f–17), providing both focus and contrast for the audience's exper-

ience of the tragic action as it develops in a setting that shares the stability and serenity of the Homeric countryside. The rustic ambience has ethical significance too (see next note).

1–53. *The Peasant's narrative.* 1–13 Agamemnon's murder and Aegisthus's usurpation, 14–30 Orestes' and Electra's survival, 31–42 their present condition, 43–53 the Peasant's 'marriage' with Electra.

Euripides normally opened his plays with an audience-directed monologue, suspending dramatic illusion and employing techniques commonly used in political and law-court speeches for presenting the background to a case: simple narration of the facts in a chronological order, clear suggestions of motives, and deftly applied ethical colouring. Lines 1–42 are mainly narrative, introducing the novel situation the playwright has created, while lines 43–54 are mainly ethical, showing the Peasant's honesty, sympathy with Orestes and Electra, and refusal to collaborate more than he has to with the usurpers. His low status will have been evident from his costume, but Euripides delays identifying him and his relationship with Electra until lines 34f., thus highlighting this revolutionary departure from the mythical tradition. His credibility is high since he has no vested interest in the affairs of the royal family. Conversely, and differently from many Euripidean prologues, his relative neutrality and the fact that he is not introducing a crisis distance us a little from the sufferers he describes. On the Peasant's character and its relevance in the play see Introduction, p. 14.

1. O ancient †plain?† of this land etc.: the scene is set by an invocation leading to a narration of the mythical background; similarly *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Oeneus* F 558, *Telephus* F 696. Such invocations are distantly derived from ritual (Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 1470f. at end) but now essentially rhetorical (cf. 54, 432). **Inachus' streams** may be virtually a synonym for the Argive plain (cf. *Supp.* 890, *Pho.* 574 with scholia, *TrGF* adesp. F 177; Kannicht on *Hel.* 1–3 'streams of Nile' = Egypt, 124 'streams of Eurotas' = Laconia). The Inachus, now Panitsa, is the main river of the Argive plain, though not prolific and usually dry in summer. Its upper reaches divided the territories of Argos and Mantinea, and it may be in this area that the Peasant and Electra are supposed to live ('up amongst mountain scarps', 210). The mythical Inachus was ancestor of the Argive people and father of the nymphs associated with the region's springs and the promotion of life, marriage and child-bearing (Aeschylus F 168. 16ff., Larson 2001.149–51); these are the nymphs to whom Aegisthus will be sacrificing when Orestes kills him (625ff., 805ff.: see notes there). In *Choephori* the returning Orestes dedicates a lock of his hair to Inachus in thanks for his nurture (A. *Cho.* 6). The Peasant is thus addressing the hereditary environment in which Orestes and Electra naturally belong, and from which their unnatural act of matricide will cause them to be exiled at the end of the play.

[L's text is suspected because *(a)* the word ἄργος is not otherwise attested before Callimachus in the 3rd century B.C. (fr. 299 Pfeiffer; Strabo 8.6.9 calls

it an alternative to πεδίον 'plain' used by 'the younger poets', which could include Euripides); *(b)* The phrase παλαιὸν Ἄργος occurs at the beginning of Sophocles' *Electra* (S. *El.* 4), which may have led to confusion here; and *(c)* Argos itself is named in line 6 and the duplication is surprising. If ἄργος is correct, **Inachus' streams** identifies the plain as explained above. If not, Herwerden's ἀρδμός is a plausible correction, describing the river itself as 'waterer of our ancient land' or 'ancient waterer of our land'. ἀρδμός is an epic word (*Odyssey* 13.427, 18.521), and rivers 'water' plains with their streams in A. *Pers.* 805f., E. *Antiope* F 223.83–5 etc. (see Haslam). »» Denniston (accepting ἄργος), Haslam 1976, Kovacs 1996.95–7, Distilo (all preferring emendation).]

2. launched Ares' power etc.: for the verb see LSJ 'ἀείρω' I.5. Note the assonance in **ἄρας...Ἄρη**. **Ares' power** is literally just 'Ares', the god embodying the fury of war. **in a thousand ships:** a round figure found in A. *Ag.* 45 and probably well established before Euripides, cf. *Andr.* 106, *IT* 10, *Or.* 352, *IA* 174. The Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2 lists a total of 1,186.

4–7. Idaean land: i.e. Trojan (cf. 317), referring to Mt. Ida near Troy. [Elmsley's correction is very likely as the rhythm of L's Ἰλιάδι (– ⏑⏑ – with 5th-foot 'anapaest') is usually reserved for essential personal names. »» Kovacs 1996. 97f.] **Dardanus' glorious city:** Dardanus was a son of Zeus and great-great-grandfather of Priam's father Laomedon (*Iliad* 20.215ff.). Troy/Ilion was founded by Laomedon's father Ilus, but the people were often called Dardanian. **he returned to Argos:** in this play 'Argos' and 'Argive' usually denote the Argolid, rarely just the town of Argos (641, 715, 1250?, 1313?). 'Mycenae' occurs only once as a synonym for Argos (963), and 'Mycenaean' seven times (35, 170, 248, 674, 708, 761, 776), always evoking ancient lineage and loyalties. In Euripides' time Mycenae was famous in legend but its site had been razed by Argos in the 460s. **spoils** were usually hung in Greek temples as thank-offerings. The detail heightens the impression of Agamemnon triumphing before his fall.

8–10. At Troy he found success: the pathetic contrast recurs at (e.g.) 163–6, 186–9, 432–41 with 479–81, 916f., 1152–60; cf. A. *Ag.* 1331–42, *Cho.* 345–62, *Eum.* 631–7. **but in his own home etc.:** this puts the murder in Agamemnon's own palace as in Aeschylus. The *Odyssey* was probably unorthodox in placing it at a feast in Aegisthus's house (*Od.* 11.389 ~ 24.22, 4.528ff., 11.410; *Od.* 3. 234 implies Agamemnon's house). **with her guile:** Clytemnestra is often connected more closely with the plotting *(dolos*: e.g. *Od.* 4.92, 11.422, 429, 24.199, A. *Ag.* 1495 ~ 1519, 1636, *Cho.* 626(?), 991, S. *El.* 123, 198, 279, E. *El.* 166, 983), but Aegisthus's part in it is sometimes stressed (*Od.* 3.235, *Ag.* 1223–5, 1609 etc., *Cho.* 556), and in *Od.* 4.524–37 the 'guileful' (δολόμητις) Aegisthus executes his own plot. Deceit adds to the shame of Clytemnestra's treachery, and in tragedy it suggests Aegisthus's effeminacy. **and the violence** (lit. 'hand')**...of Aegisthus:** for the contrast between planner and agent cf. [A.] *PV* 619, LSJ 'χείρ' IV. In this play and in Sophocles' *Electra* Clytemnestra has shared the killing with Aegisthus (86f., 89, 123, 1046–8), whereas in A. *Ag.*

and Pindar, *Pyth.* 11.17f. she both controls the plotting and strikes alone. Each of them is 'killer of Agamemnon' when their individual guilt is stressed (Clytemnestra 279, 745–6, 970, 984, 1067–8, 1093–5, 1148–64; Aegisthus 599, 763, 869, 885, 916). The *Odyssey* sometimes treats Aegisthus as the actual killer (*Od.* 1.36, 299f., 3.193–8, 305–8, 4.534) but can allude to Clytemnestra as joint (11.410, 24.97) or sole (24.200) agent, probably for the same reasons, which make it hard to decide if divergent traditions were a factor (Prag 1985.72, Garvie 1986.xi–xiii). Archaic depictions show Aegisthus struggling with Agamemnon while Clytemnestra stabs him (Prag A1–A4); the Dokimasia Painter's krater of 470–465 B.C. (Prag A6) shows them both armed but Aegisthus taking the lead. On the choice of weapons see 160–1 n.

11. relinquishing Tantalus' ancient sceptre: Tantalus founded the dynasty but suffered a spectacular fall from prosperity for betraying the gods' favour, initiating a pattern of suffering amongst his descendants (cf. 1175–6, Gantz 1993.531–6, Cropp on *IT* 386–8). The symbolism of his punishment is developed in Euripides' *Orestes*. Pelops traditionally established the dynasty in Greece by taking Oenomaus's kingdom of Elis, but in *Iliad* 2.101–8 he receives the sceptre from Zeus and the quarrel of his heirs Atreus and Thyestes is politely overlooked. In poetry and art the sceptre symbolizes Agamemnon's legitimate kingship, memorably in Clytemnestra's dream about Orestes' return in S. *El.* 417–23. In Roman times a 'sceptre of the Pelopids' was worshipped at Chaeronea (Pausanias 9.40.11).

15. the female scion Electra: lit. 'the female offshoot (consisting) of Electra'; cf. Homeric βίη and ἴς ('the might of Diomedes' = 'the mighty Diomedes', etc.): KG 1.280. **θάλος** 'scion' is itself an epicism, used by Euripides of Agamemnon's children at *IT* 171, 209, 232 (cf. *Pho.* 88). This play does not mention a third sister, Chrysothemis, who is named in *Iliad* 9.145 and 287, appears in at least one pre-Aeschylean vase-painting (Prag C11), and has an important role in Sophocles' *Electra* (cf. Introduction, pp. 26–8). [For θάλος 'scion' Chadwick 1996.140f. gives examples from epic and archaic poetry but overlooks those in tragedy. All are easily found in the *TLG.*]

16. his father's old tutor: the *tropheus* (or *paidagogos,* 287, otherwise 'Old Man') is a retainer who looked after the young Agamemnon (488, 506–7) like the former *paidagogos* of Creusa's father in *Ion.* In Sophocles' play he has raised Orestes too, and joined him in exile. Here he has lived in the palace during Orestes' childhood (seeing him get his scar, 573f.), sent the boy to a safe refuge (286, 556), and been driven from the city by Aegisthus (412). He is not named, and does not have high standing like Achilles' guardian Phoenix (*Iliad* 9.485–91, '*tropheus*' in S. *Phil.* 344). His counterpart in *Ion* is a slave (*Ion* 734) like his real-life counterparts in 5th-century Athens. This and lines 283–7 prepare his role in the recognition of Orestes (see 487–92 n. on his character). Both Sophocles and Euripides substitute a male retainer for the female nurse who carried Orestes to safety in Stesichorus (*PMGF* 218), Pindar (*Pyth.* 11. 26)

and Pherecydes (F 134 Jacoby/Fowler) and who appears (not linked with the rescue) in A. *Cho.* 734–82.

18. Strophius: ruler of Phocis and father of Pylades by a sister of Agamemnon (*IT* 918, *Or.* 1233; Gantz 1993.683). In A. *Ag.* 880 he is Agamemnon's *doruxenos* ('friend and ally') to whom Clytemnestra has sent Orestes before Agamemnon's return.

21. suitors from Greece's first families: Electra would normally be married within her own clan or into another ruling family for political purposes. Herodotus tells the story of Cleisthenes of Sicyon entertaining numerous aristocratic competitors for the hand of his daughter Agariste, wishing to marry her to 'the best of the Greeks' (Hdt. 6.126ff.).

22–3. Aegisthus feared etc.: the wisdom of forestalling vengeance from a slain enemy's descendants, and of leaving descendants to avenge oneself, was proverbial, e.g. Hom. *Od.* 3.196, Hdt. 1.155, S. *El.* 964–6, E. *Hcld.* 468–70, 991–1008, *Andr.* 519–22, *HF* 165–9, *Tro.* 721–3, 1158–66. [L's μή τῳ παῖδας ἀργείων...ποινάτορας 'might bear sons to one of the Argives as avengers' implies that the Peasant is not an Argive and makes an impossible rhythm in line 23. It may be due to confusion with line 268.]

25. fraught with fear: with alliteration and assonance in **φόβου πολλοῦ πλέων**. P-sounds are often so used, e.g. 56, 151f., 199f.

27–8. so he planned etc.: **βουλεύσαντος** is a genitive absolute with subject unstated: '(him) having planned, his mother...'; so e.g. 1151, 1168. »» *SMT* §848.

29. For her husband's death...a pretext: Clytemnestra will use the sacrifice of Iphigenia to justify both killing Agamemnon and her adultery with Aegisthus, though she also claims it was Agamemnon's adultery with Cassandra that drove her to murder: cf. 1011–50 n., 1060–1101 n.

30. the children's slaying she feared might rouse resentment: lit. 'she feared she might be subjected to resentment of the children's murder'. *Phthonos*, like Latin *invidia* (English 'envy') is hostile resentment wishing damage on its target. The power of public opinion was proverbial, e.g. Hom. *Od.* 16.75 ~ 19.527, Hes. *Works* 760–4, A. *Ag.* 456, 938. Clytemnestra's fear of it is mentioned again in 643 and 1013–17 (cf. A. *Ag.* 1413), and Electra's in 902–4. Euripides' Clytemnestra, unlike Sophocles', is not wholly without shame (*aidôs*), and she will win some sympathy in her confrontation with Electra (998–1138). But the Peasant is also calling her 'cruel' and questioning her motive. See further Introduction, pp. 4–5.

33. to any man who killed him: understand ἐκείνῳ as antecedent to **ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ** (KG 2.402–3).

35–8. me, who am sprung etc.: the Peasant's tendency to moralize in a self-conscious and slightly naive fashion is seen in all his speeches (77–81, 341–4, 357–63, 406f., 420–31). He has 'nobility' (*eugeneia*) because he comes from an old Mycenean family (this would appeal to Euripides' Athenian audience who held citizenship and political equality by right of birth). But being poor he does

not get the esteem (*timê*) given to noble status. Moral nobility is another matter: it can flourish in a well-bred man even if he is poor, as he will demonstrate (esp. 361–400). The incompatibility of poverty with high standing was proverbial (e.g. Alcaeus fr. 360 LP, Pind. *Isthm.* 2.9–12) and a frequent topic in Euripides (e.g. *Pho.* 438–42, F 249, F 326, F 362.14–18, F 395, F 462); see also 369–72 n. The complexities and contradictions of economic, social and moral status are often discussed in Athenian drama and oratory. »» Denniston on 253, Dover 1974.109–12.

40–2. if a man of standing had taken her: for **ἔσχεν** 'taken (in marriage)' cf. 166, LSJ 'ἔχω' (A) A.4. **he would have roused Agamemnon's murder etc.:** i.e. he would have reactivated the quest for vengeance. In *Choephori* Agamemnon himself must be roused from his sleep in the underworld to help his children avenge him (*Cho.* 315–8, 495). In *Eumenides* the Erinyes embody the sleeping and waking of unavenged wrongs (*Eum.* 94–142), while Orestes claims that his mother's blood 'slumbers and dies from my hand' because he has been ritually purified (*Eum.* 280f.). Images of sleeping and waking shape the discourse of wrongdoing, vengeance and justice throughout the *Oresteia* (»» Mace 2002–3, 2004–5). [In 42 Reiske's ποτέ 'at last' (cf. 663, 771) is favoured by Denniston, but **τότε at that time** stresses that Electra's marriage would have led directly to Aegisthus's downfall.]

44. she is still in fact a virgin: cf. 50–3, 99, 254–62, 270f., 945f. Electra's virginity was traditional, her loyalty being focused exclusively on her birth family. Euripides explores its supposed physical and psychological effects. Prolonged sexual inactivity in young women was seen in late 5th-century Greek medical theory as leading to ill health and emotional instability (Pl. *Tim.* 91c, Hippocr. *Genit.* 4, *Mul.* 1.2, 1.7, *Virg. passim.* »» King 1983.111–5). It is often alleged that in classical Greek παρθένος is a purely social term ('unmarried adolescent girl'), never a physiological one ('virgin'), e.g. Calame 2001.27, Chadwick 1996.226–8; against this see Sissa 1990.76–92. Both here and in 270 the meaning is plainly physiological. [**εὐνῇ, in bed**: recent editors print the variant ἐν εὐνῇ, but the simple locative dative recalls epic εὐνῇ μιγῆναι 'mingle in bed', *Il.* 3.445, *Od.* 1.433 etc.]

45–9. I am ashamed etc.: the Peasant agrees with Electra and Orestes that the marriage is outrageous to them. **wretched Orestes: ἄθλιον** expresses pity for Orestes' plight. Electra likewise calls herself and Agamemnon ἄθλιος (118, 155, 366), while τλήμων 'suffering' characterizes both Orestes (131, 233, 505, 850) and Agamemnon (1160). Orestes and Electra describe themselves similarly, and persistently, in *Orestes*.

50–3. if anyone calls me a fool etc.: a moralizing 'conclusive reflection' rounds off the speech and (as often) the scene: cf. 80f., 426–31, 953–6, [1097–9]. **using poor measures:** a κανών ('canon') is a measuring-rod or ruler used in carpentry, masonry etc. A faulty κανών gives false measurements or crooked lines. For the technical background and Euripides' frequent use of the metaphor see Stieber 2011.380–97.

54–81. *Dialogue of Electra and the Peasant.* The dialogue displays Electra's predicament and establishes her point of view, with the Peasant acting as a foil. Euripides usually does this in scenes following the prologue speech (e.g. *Hipp.* 88–120 showing Hippolytus' rigidity, *HF* 60–106 debating between hope and despair). Electra clings to hating her father's murderers and resenting what they have done to her and her brother, while also recognizing the Peasant's kindness and her obligation to him. The reasons she offers for her toil (displaying Aegisthus's hybris, doing her duty by the Peasant) are not so much contradictory as on different levels: on one level her isolation in grief and humiliation, on the other her participation in a mundane life where the Peasant himself assumes that she toils 'for my sake' (64), just as the Chorus will expect her to share their activities.

Staging. The Peasant does not fail to notice Electra; stage convention did not require verbal introduction of a new character entering through the stage door, especially when there was no one else present to hear such an introduction and no realistic way of motivating it. The effect is to engage the curiosity of the audience as they first see a woman resembling a slave. Electra does overlook the Peasant, and addresses her speech to a divine audience like other isolated sufferers in tragedy.

54. O dark Night etc.: see 1 n. on the invocation. Addresses to gods and/or the elements occur in the complaining monologues or monodies in [A]. *PV* 88ff., E. *Med.* 96ff. (esp. 160–3), *Andr.* 91ff., S. *El.* 86ff. Prometheus and Medea proclaim the wrongs they have suffered, while Andromache gives voice to her grief (saying this is typically done by women). Electra does both (58, 126). **νὺξ μέλαινα dark night** is a Homeric phrase (*Il.* 14.239 etc.). It names the primeval goddess Night in Hes. *Theog.* 20 and 123: cf. A. *Eum.* 745 'Night, dark mother (of the Furies)', E. *Cyc.* 601 'Sleep, child of dark Night', *Ion* 1150 'dark-robed night', *HF* 834 '(Madness) virgin daughter of black (κελαινῆς) Night'; also Ar. *Frogs* 1331 and 1335 parodying Euripides.

55–6. in which I bear this pitcher etc.: water-carrying was one of the few public activities of Greek women and a popular subject in Attic vase-painting, here adapted dramatically by Euripides (Stieber 2011.249f.). Electra's entrance is pointedly contrasted with her entrance in Aeschylus's *Choephori* where she brings libations to Agamemnon's tomb. In vase-paintings of that scene (cf. 82–111 n.) the jug she carries is usually a wine-jug *(oinochoê)* but sometimes a water-pitcher *(hydria)*.

57–9. not that I've come etc.: Electra calls the world to witness her humiliation in a quasi-legal manner, publicly demanding redress (so this is not mere self-indulgence: cf. Lloyd 1986.3 citing Schulze 1966.160–89). Herodotus tells how Cambyses of Persia tried to humiliate the deposed pharaoh Psammenitus by making him watch his daughter and other noble Egyptian girls fetching water in public, dressed as slaves (Hdt. 3.14). The women of Troy fear a similar fate, *Tro.* 205f. [Lines 57–8 should refer specifically to the water-carrying, so taking them as a parenthesis is better than placing them after 59 as Diggle pro-

posed. An optative ἀφείην in 59 ('and so that I might send...') is very unlikely.]

60–3. the baneful daughter of Tyndareus etc.: **πανόλης** here and πανώλεθρος in 86 convey two relevant meanings, 'utterly destructive' and 'utterly corrupted' (cf. *HF* 1424). **has thrown me out of our home:** Electra ignores Clytemnestra's protection (cf. 30 n.); this suggests hatred but hardly delusion (cf. Introduction, pp. 9–10). **bearing other children with Aegisthus:** Clytemnestra compounds her crime by helping Aegisthus get heirs for the estate and the kingdom he has usurped. Electra makes the same complaint in S. *El.* 589f. These children are not known to have appeared in earlier versions of the myth. Pausanias says that the early epic poet Cinaethon told of Orestes having a son by Erigone 'daughter of Aegisthus' (Pausanias 2.18.6, Cinaethon fr. 4 *GEF*). In Hyginus *Fab.* 122 Orestes kills Aletes 'son of Aegisthus' and nearly kills Erigone 'daughter of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra', but how this relates to earlier accounts is very unclear (»» Gantz 1993. 685f., Kannicht–Snell on *TrGF adesp.* F 1b, F 3e). **she robs Orestes and me:** lit. 'she makes us by-products of the house'. Aegisthus will ignore their rights in favour of his own children by Clytemnestra.

67. I consider you equal to the gods: in giving succour, cf. Hom. *Od.* 8.467–8, E. *HF* 521–2, *IA* 973–4. There is nothing hybristic about such comparisons.

77–9. Well, if you think so etc.: the Peasant brings Electra's hardships into perspective, both undercutting her complaints and displaying some lack of empathy. The fact of her labour is more important than the amount of it, both to her (57–9 n.) and to him (he too dislikes her humiliation). The remark also serves a dramatic purpose, suggesting that he will be absent indefinitely while she will return shortly. **at daybreak:** Hesiod recommends starting field-work at dawn, *Works* 576–81. The Peasant's Hesiodic tone re-emphasizes his sterling qualities.

80–1. No one...can...collect a living idly.: another 'conclusive reflection' (50–3 n.); cf. *Works* 298–319, esp. 302–3 'Hunger is entirely fitting for an idle (ἀεργός) man. Gods and men resent the man who lives in idleness.' One of the few marginal notes in ms. L cites the proverb σὺν Ἀθηνᾷ καὶ χέρα κίνει, 'move your own arm along with Athena', i.e. don't rely on Athena's help alone. For similar statements see Denniston here, Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 811 (pp. 373–4), Pulleyn 2007.212–5, and e.g. Eur. *IT* 120f., 910f., F 432, Plut. *Mor.* 169b–c. West 1997.552 cites an Assyrian parallel. *Argia* ('idleness') was an indictable offence in Athenian law (Harrison 1968.79).

82–111. *Orestes' speech.* 82–87 his situation, 87–101 his recent movements and plans, 102–11 he decides to seek local information and notices Electra approaching. The speech is again expository, with little emotional colouring. The focus will remain on Electra so long as Orestes remains unidentified (cf. Introduction, pp. 7f.).

Staging. The newcomers arrive by one *eisodos* as Electra and her husband leave by the other. They have travellers' shoes or boots, hats (*pilos*, skull-cap, or *petasos*, sun-hat) and a *himation* (outer garment) and/or *chlamys* (cape), perhaps with some baggage (360 n.). These items appear often in the pictorial tradition of their encounter with Electra at Agamemnon's tomb (Prag F2–7; *LIMC* III 'Elektra I'). Servants are implied by 360 (if genuine), 393f. and 765–8, perhaps one each for Orestes and Pylades. Servants often remain unmentioned until addressed.

82–5. Pylades, I count you first etc.: Orestes' companion is identified immediately, his function is established in the next four lines, and he is named again at the end of the speech for complete clarity. Otherwise he is not addressed until Electra greets him after the murder of Aegisthus. He is a non-speaking character (*kôphon prosôpon*, 'mute mask') as in *Choephori* (except *Cho.* 900–2) and S. *Electra*, and for the same reason: a speaking part would waste one of the three available actors, especially if he were continually on stage with Orestes.

Both Electra and Orestes acknowledge the friendship and loyalty of their partners. The friendlessness of exiles was proverbial, cf. 236, 352, *Med.* 560, *HF* 302–7, Theognis 209, Tyrtaeus fr. 10.2–12 *IEG*. The disloyalty of friends in misfortune and the value of loyal friends were even commoner topics (606–7 n.).

87–9. Now from the god's rites etc.: Orestes comes from, and is guided by, Apollo's oracle at Delphi. The god's advice is never spelled out as it is in A. *Cho.* 269–97, S. *El.* 32–7, and this emphasizes his remoteness from this play's action, but we may assume that he has told Orestes to use guile against his enemies in just retaliation for their use of guile against his father (8–10 n.), as is stressed in *Cho.* 274, 556–9, 726–9, 946f., S. *El.* 35–7.

90. I've been to my father's tomb: the tomb is mentioned again at 288f., 323–31, 509–19. It is somewhere outside the city and not very close to Electra's dwelling, thus differing significantly from the tomb in *Choephori* (where it is the focus of the first half of the play) and in S. *Electra* (where it is not far from the palace).

91. devoted a lock of my hair.: this hints that the offerings, and especially the lock, will be important in the recognition of Orestes (513ff). Hair-cutting was an act of mourning (e.g. Hom. *Od.* 4.197f., 24.45f., E. *Alc.* 101–4, 425–9). 'Initial offerings' (ἀπαρχαί) of hair were made at funerals or tombs, at least in stories about heroes: for Patroclus, Hom. *Il.* 23.135–53; Orestes for Agamemnon here and in A. *Cho.* 6f., S. *El.* 892ff.; Heracles for Polystratus, Pausanias 7.17.8; cf. S. *El.* 448–51, E. *Pho.* 1524f., *Or.* 96, 113, 128f.. Heroes, rivers and gods associated with adolescence were often given hair-offerings by boys approaching adulthood and girls approaching marriage. For heroes such offerings were explained aetiologically as mourning tributes (e.g. for Hippolytus at Troezen). In A. *Cho.* 6f. the offering is linked with one to Inachus in thanks for Orestes' safe passage to adulthood. »» Garland 1985, ch. 7 (tomb tendance),

Burkert 1985.70, 374 n. 29 (hair-offerings), Garvie on A. *Cho.* 6 (Orestes' offering).

92. and on the altar etc.: Euripides uses πυρά ('pyre') as a synonym for ἑσχάρα ('hearth'), a low altar on which offerings were burned: cf. 325, 513, 1022. **a slain sheep's blood**: lit. 'blood from an ovine slaying'; for such phrasing cf. 741–2, KG 1.261–3. The sheep was black (513) as in most sacrifices for the dead, where animal victims were burned after their throats had been cut and the blood drained onto the altar and/or into the earth. Such sacrifices were strongly associated with hero-cult and were probably restricted or obsolete in ordinary rituals for the dead in classical Athens. »» Ekroth 2002.54–9, 173–7, 254–7, 2005.12–14.

96. to escape to another region: Orestes is cautious, but perhaps not excessively so given his situation. In the *Odyssey* Odysseus is equally cautious (esp. Hom. *Od.* 20.30, 22.147); Eumaeus's hut is 'in the far extremity of the countryside' (*Od.* 24.150), and Odysseus reveals himself there only to his son (*Od.* 16).

97. should anyone look at me: σκοπῶν is from σκοπέω ('observing', 'examining', cf. 558, 829), not σκοπός ('one of the guards'). Orestes is wary of any recognition.

100. make her my accomplice: Orestes' first question, once he feels safe, will be whether Electra would share in the matricide (274–82).

101. how things are within the walls: γε here is emphatic (*GP* 117); he operates *outside* the walls (94) in order to learn the situation *inside* them.

102. the pale face of dawn is rising: spreading upwards from the horizon. [Parallels such as 730 strongly support Kirchhoff's genitive ἕω against L's nominative ἕως ('dawn is raising her pale face').]

103. let's switch our path etc.: Orestes suggests they leave the road and wait for a passer-by. This is simpler than 'There is no one here. Let us try somewhere else' (Denniston), or supposing that he wants to enquire in a more remote place (Steidle 1968.70).

104–6. Either some ploughman etc.: Orestes' guesses are humorously contrasted with what the audience knows. The Peasant has already left to do his ploughing, and the 'serving-woman' who will appear very soon is Electra.

107–11. *Staging.* In *Choephori* Orestes and Pylades stand aside as Electra and the Chorus approach Agamemnon's tomb with libations (*Cho.* 20f.). In Sophocles' *Electra* (77ff.) Orestes' tutor thinks the entering woman might be a slave, Orestes guesses it is Electra, but the tutor insists he should leave to visit Agamemnon's tomb. Here Orestes thinks Electra's **close-cropped head** indicates slavery rather than mourning, and he and Pylades retreat and lurk near the house so that they can overhear her without being seen, assuming (rather optimistically) that they will learn something useful. Diggle 1981.33f. suggests that they hide behind an altar of Apollo next to his image at the entrance to the house (see 216–7 n.). Their hiding makes way for Electra's monody and prepares for the encounter in which Orestes has recognized her but she does not know him (215–99 n.). 'Eavesdropping' scenes are rare in extant tragedy (only

those just mentioned and S. *OC* 111ff.), but they may have been commoner than this suggests and were much used and elaborated in comedy (Ar. *Ach.* 238ff. is the earliest extant example). »» Fraenkel 1962.22–6, Taplin 1977. 334–6.

112–166. Electra's monody

Returning from the spring, Electra mourns for herself, her father and her brother, then deposits her pitcher and enacts a scene of mourning, recalling in detail the horror of her father's murder.

The monody and parodos are formally distinct from the preceding spoken scenes and make a closely linked pair. Euripides was noted for developing the solo song form in tragedy (Ar. *Frogs* 944, 1329ff.), and the chorus's entrance was an important focus for this development. Monodies or duets were added before the parodos, first in chanted anapaests (*Medea*, perhaps *Alexander*; cf. Andromache's elegiacs in *Andromache*), then partly or wholly in lyrics (*Helen, Andromeda, Ion, Hypsipyle*). The parodos itself came to be shared between chorus and actors (all of the above except *Andromache*, and *Iphigenia in Tauris*). Both elements are found in *Prometheus Bound* and Sophocles' *Electra* (with themes similar to those in E. *Electra*), the second in *Orestes* and Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. The format typically concentrates attention on the leading character's predicament and emotions as the drama begins. Many tragic monodies are outpourings of grief and anguish (the term 'monody' later came to be applied to funeral orations), sung by high-status characters (often enslaved or persecuted) and especially women or barbarians. The chorus responds with sympathy and vain attempts at consolation. Like operatic arias, monodies were well suited to the repertoire of tragic actors performing excerpts from famous tragedies at festivals in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. »» Barner 1971, Popp 1971.268–70, Hall 1999, Di Marco 1999, Di Poli 2011.1–9.

Electra's water-carrying is the occasion for her lament (the work-songs in *Ion* and *Hypsipyle* are framed similarly, though more elaborately and picturesquely, by their singers' occupations as temple-keeper and nursemaid). Subject matter and verbal style reflect the conventional features of the ritual wailing (*goos*) for the dead which was the duty of female family members, e.g. *Iliad* 24.725–75, cf. 19.282–300, 22.431–6, 477–514. The distinction between *thrênos* as formal dirge (the examples in Pindar frs. 128a–138 have a large consolatory element) and *goos* as personal lament is not strictly observed in the vocabulary of tragedy, but Electra uses *goos* several times, *thrênêmata* only once (215). A formal lament would be communal and antiphonal (*Il.* 24.719–24 mentions leaders or beginners *(exarchoi)* of the *thrênos*, individuals leading or beginning the *goos*, and the groaning of the women in response to each). Here Electra is alone but acts like an *exarchos*, dictating movement, song and gesture to herself (112f. ~ 127f., 125f., 150). »» Alexiou 1974.11–14, 102f., 225 n. 6.

Most of Electra's lament is addressed in normal fashion to those lamented, Agamemnon and Orestes. Typical features include interjected vocatives, repeated exclamations of woe, repetitive phrasing *(anaphora)* for pathetic effect (130, 160f.), and emotive adjectives often highlighted by separation from their nouns *(hyperbaton)*. These features and the virtuoso singing which such highly wrought poetry demanded gave tragic monody its impact. But the general effect is less extravagant and more sombre than the similar lyrics of Ion, Iphigenia (*in Tauris*) or Helen, let alone Aristophanes' parody of Euripides' New Musical style in *Frogs* 1331–63. This may be due to the tone of the play and/or the fact that it is an earlier example of the style. Details of music, movement and gesture, important as they were, are difficult to recover (for evidence of singing styles see West 1992. 39–47, Hall 2002.18–24).

Electra begins with herself and her own suffering. This may seem to characterize her as self-absorbed and self-dramatizing, but her identity and her misery need to be displayed to the watching Orestes, and it was conventional for those lamenting the absence or death of loved ones to dwell on the loss suffered by the living, including themselves, e.g. Penelope in *Odyssey* 4.722ff. ('Zeus has afflicted me excessively through the loss of Odysseus and now Telemachus'), Eumaeus in *Od.* 14.137ff. ('So Odysseus is dead, leaving misery for all his friends, and for me in particular, so kind was he to me'). All the examples of *gooi* from the *Iliad* mentioned above express personal loss, esp. 19.287–290, 22.431f. and 477, 24.725f. and 773–5. Lloyd 1986.4–6 gives examples in Euripides.

Metre. Two strophic pairs, each (unusually) with a distinct mesode. Electra's self-directions occupy the beginnings (or in 125f. the whole) of each unit except the last, and are metrically distinct. The first strophe and antistrophe open with heavily spondaic anapaests (– – rather than ⏑ ⏑ – : 112–4, 127–9) as Electra walks sadly and laboriously with the pitcher on her head, and there are striking symmetries of content (115–9 ~ 130–4 Electra ~ Orestes; 120f. ~ 135f. Electra's hardships; 122–4 ~ 137–9 Agamemnon). The second pair begins with dactylic lines (– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ etc.: 140–2, 157–9). The lament is largely aeolic (115–24, 130–9, 143–9, 151–6, 160–6), i.e. glyconics (– x – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ –) and close relatives with pherecratean cadences (– x – ⏑ ⏑ – –). For Dale 1969.3 the song 'achieves its plangent effect by an extraordinary metrical monotony'. In the refrain-like mesode 150–6 the rhythm is almost unvarying. »» Dale 1981.91f., 95, Donzelli 1978.271–97, 1995a.74–6, Di Poli 2011.116–29. [Kovacs prints a different arrangement of 140–66 suggested by Willink, with 140–2 and 150–6 as mesodes and 143–9 and 159–66 as strophe and antistrophe. This requires adding ἰώ μοι μοι before 143 to match 159, and assuming that the dactylic sequences 140f. and 157f. do not correspond as they seem to.]

112–3. Press on etc.: Electra exhorts herself, absorbed in the water-carrying and lamentation which for her are a ritual performed at the start of each day. **σύντειν(ε)** (lit. 'intensify') suggests concentration rather than haste. For **ὥρα (ἐστί) this is the hour** see LSJ 'ὥρα' (C) B.I.3. [Willink's ᾠδᾷ ('Intensify the

tread of your steps *with song*') seems unneeded though favoured by Kovacs 1996.100.]

119. wretched Electra: cf. 45–9 n.

123. slaughtered by your wife: σφαγεὶς suggests animal slaughter or sacrifice, a frequent image for the murder of Agamemnon, e.g. *Odyssey* 11.411, A. *Ag.* 1389, 1433. The interplay of sacrifice and murder is a fundamental theme in the *Oresteia* and in Euripides' play (Introduction, pp. 19–20). [Kamerbeek's **(ἐ)κ σᾶς ἀλόχου** corrects L's anomalous 'genitive of agent': cf. *IT* 552, *Hec.* 24. σᾶς ἀλόχου σφαγαῖς (Porson, Hermann) would suggest 'the slaughtering of your wife' rather than 'your wife's slaughtering of you'.]

125–6. Come, rouse the same lament etc.: strings of short syllables in the Greek suggest a paroxysm of grief. **the pleasure of abundant tears:** lit. 'many-teared pleasure', a compressed expression of a kind frequent in Euripides' later lyrics (Breitenbach 1934.204–9). The pleasure of lamentation is a commonplace of Greek epic and later poetry, e.g. *Iliad* 23.10, 24.513, *Odyssey* 19.213, 251, 21.57, and Electra herself in A. *Cho.* 447–9, S. *El.* 285f.; see also 144–6 n.

130–1. What city, what household etc.: Electra pictures her brother as an exile wandering from one refuge to another, cf. 139, 202–5, 587–9 (Chorus), 1112f.; and she is right, 233–6. [Hartung corrected L's λατρεύεις 'are you serving'. Orestes is not pictured as a servant or slave elsewhere in this play, and λατρεύω is not normally a transitive verb. The point in 205 (**roaming...to a hireling hearth**) is that he must live amongst humble labourers. »» Slings 1997.138.]

137. O Zeus, Zeus: the interjection reinforces the wish: cf. *Med.* 764, *Pho.* 1290, *Or.* 332, S. *Trach.* 995, *OT* 1198, *Phil.* 1233.

138. an avenger: lit. 'a helper', assisting the dead man's vengeance (cf. S. *OT* 496; both passages are wrongly explained in LSJ 'ἐπίκουρος' II.2). **of that most shameful bloodshed:** shameful to Agamemnon, trapped and defenceless in Clytemnestra's robe (A. *Ag.* 1380–7), his corpse mutilated by his killers (A. *Cho.* 439). The shame of this is stressed elsewhere, e.g. *Cho.* 94, 434f., 494, 556f., S. *El.* 444–6, 487. [All of this justifies Seidler's αἰσχίστων against L's ἐχθίστων 'most hostile'.]

139. your wandering steps: ἀλάταν is a noun (cf. 202) used adjectively, like 168 ἀγρότειραν, 169 γαλακτοπότας, 170 οὐριβάτας, 205 θῆσσαν, 207 χερνῆσι etc.: KG 1.271–3.

140. Take this vessel: unlike Electra's instructions to herself this seems to be addressed to a servant who comes out of the cottage for this purpose. She is otherwise unnoticed, like the attendants in *IT* 168f., *Hec.* 609–13 (with a later dramatic role, 658ff.), *Hel.* 865–72, S. *El.* 634–6, 1123. Some think Electra is still instructing herself (e.g. Donzelli 1978.288–96, Hammond 1984.378f.), but someone has to take the urn inside, and there is no sign that Electra does so when she finally enters the house nearly three hundred lines later (Raeburn 2000.151–4 suggests that the urn remains until then as a symbol of her self-

inflicted suffering). A convenient attendant relieves the Old Man of his baggage, 500.

142. †*so I may raise high*†: the manuscripts leave the text uncertain. [Neither ἐπορθοβοάσω 'I may raise high' nor ἐπορθροβοάσω 'I may cry in the twilight' is attested elsewhere, and neither matches the metre of the corresponding line 159 (hence Seidler's ἰώ μοι ⟨ἰώ⟩ μοι there). Those favouring ἐπορθροβοάσω note 909f. where Electra recalls rehearsing her condemnation of Aegisthus in the twilight hours. Dindorf's ἐπορθρεύσω would require γόοις νυχίοις in 141 ('so I may be wakeful in the twilight with these nocturnal cries', cf. *Supp.* 977f., *Tro.* 182, *Phaethon* 69). Both this and Schmidt's ἐπορθιάζω ('so I may raise up', cf. A. *Pers.* 1050, *Ag.* 29, 1120) are rather far from L's text. Willink's ὑπ' ὄρθρον βοάσω ('so I may cry before the dawn') again requires alteration in 159 unless 140–2 are defined as a mesode (see above, *Metre*). Distilo defends ἐπορθοβοάσω and suggests that ἰώ μοί μοι is a stopgap supplied by a copyist to replace a missing line. »» Donzelli 1993.277–9.]

143–4. crying out a song of Hades: L's text is again disjointed ('a cry, a song, a chant of Hades') and the restoration (suggested by Diggle) uncertain. [The restoration provides a connecting participle **ἰαχοῦσ(α)** and removes a possible duplication in L's ἀοιδὰν...Ἀΐδα. In 143b and 144 the adjustments provide metrical responsion with 161a–b. Probably 144 is complete and 161b corrupt, rather than the reverse as Willink supposes. »» Donzelli 1993.279–81, Distilo.]

144–6. the laments with which...I pine: λείβομαι, lit 'I flow, dissolve', suggests the weeping that is part of Electra's endless lamentation: cf. epic δάκρυα λείβων 'pouring tears' (*Iliad* 13.658 etc.), *Andr.* 532 λείβομαι δάκρυσιν κόρας, lit. 'I flow with tears as to my eyes', *Supp.* 1119 καταλειβομένης...ἄλγεσι πολλοῖς 'melting away with many griefs', *Supp.* 79–81 ἄπληστος ἅδε μ' ἐξάγει χάρις γόων | πολύπονος, ὡς ἐξ ἀλιβάτου πέτρας | ὑγρὰ ῥεοῦσα στάγων ἄπαυστος αἰεί, 'This insatiable pleasure of lamentation leads me on, full of suffering, like a stream of water pouring from a steep cliff, ever unceasing'; also *Andr.* 116 with Stieber 2011.119–22. [L's διέπομαι, supposedly 'I am engaged in' (LSJ) or 'I devote myself to' (Kovacs), is hardly possible. Middle-voice uses of διέπω are otherwise unknown, and the passive 'I am governed' appears only in much later Greek (which may explain why a scribe wrote it here). »» Diggle 1981.32.]

146–50. slashing with nails etc.: Electra performs three ritual mourning actions: scratching cheeks and throat with fingernails, beating head with hands or wrists, and tearing the hair and lacerating the scalp. Rending of garments is added in the chorus's mourning for Agamemnon in A. *Cho.* 22–31. The actions were discouraged at Athens by a Solonian law and thus have an epic or archaic resonance. Dennistons lists many mentions in tragedy. »» Garland 1985.29, and for material evidence Kurtz–Boardman 1971.59, 78, 104, 213, Sheedy 1985.

151–5. And as some moaning swan etc.: swans often sing beautifully in Greek literature, usually for Apollo and Artemis. In *HF* 110 and [Moschus] 3.14–18

the swan sings in mourning, and A. *Ag.* 1444f. and Pl. *Phd.* 84e 3ff. reflect a tradition that it mourns its own impending death. Our passage may owe something both to *Ag.* 1444f. and to Sophocles' variation of the image with Electra as the nightingale Procne, eternally mourning the child she has slain (S. *El.* 107–9, cf. *Ag.* 1140–5 with ref. to Cassandra; Arnott 1986). Commentators have detected a belief in the filial piety of swans, but *Ba.* 1365 can be interpreted differently and Cic. *Fin.* 2.33 does not specify swans. **moaning** probably suggests 'the bugle-like call-notes of the whooper [swan]' (Arnott); cf. *Phaethon* 78, μελιβόας κύκνος ἀχεῖ 'the sweet-voiced swan moans'. Words related to **ἀχέτας** can describe cries or songs of mourning, e.g. *Alc.* 423, *Hec.* 155, S. *Trach.* 866, *El.* 109 (ἠχώ, in the nightingale simile). **by river's streams:** swans are associated with various rivers: Oceanus (Hes. *Shield* 315, E. *Phaethon* 77), Xanthus (Alcman fr. 1.100f. *PMGF*), Hebrus (Bacchyl. 16.6, Ar. *Birds* 774), Pactolus (Call. *Hymn* 4.250), Strymon ([Moschus] 3.15); also the Delian lake (E. *IT* 1103, *Ion* 167). Electra mourns as she returns from the stream. **the guileful corded net:** lit. 'the guileful enclosure of cords'. Again the simile has a double reference, to the trapped swan and to Agamemnon snared in the robe thrown over him by Clytemnestra. This robe underlies a whole system of net images in the *Oresteia* (»» Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 1127, Lebeck 1971.63–8, Prag 1985.3f., 80f.). The robe appears in art at least a little before the *Oresteia*.

157–8. washed with those final waters etc.: funereal language; women would wash a corpse before its laying out *(prothesis*: Kurtz–Boardman 1971.143f., 149–61, Garland 1985.24), but here the immediate reference is to Clytemnestra bathing Agamemnon on his return from Troy, which in A. *Ag.* (esp. 1107–35) is her occasion for trapping and killing him. There is also a suggestion of the sprinkling of water on a sacrificial animal (cf. 123 n., 791–839 n., Mirto 1980. 305). In *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra probably displayed the corpse 'still actually enwrapped by the cloth and still lying in the tub' (Taplin 1977.325), in a horrible parody of a *prothesis*. »» Seaford 1984. **a most pitiable repose of death** continues the double reference, contrasting the pathetic sight of the fallen Agamemnon with the normal repose of a corpse. For κοίτη 'repose' see Fraenkel on A. Ag. 1494, a passage strongly recalled here; also S. *El.* 193f. where κοίταις seems to refer to Agamemnon reclining at his homecoming feast.

159. †*O me, me*†: see above on 142.

160–1. the bitter cut of the axe etc.: both Euripides and Sophocles have Clytemnestra using an axe to kill Agamemnon: cf. 279, 1160, *Hec.* 1279, *Tro.* 361, S. *El.* 99, 195f. The axe was associated with her in some way at least as early as the mid-6th century (a metope from Foce del Sele, Prag C7, Pl. 7a with pp. 11–13). It was probably her weapon in Stesichorus's *Oresteia* where she dreamed of her husband reappearing as a snake 'with bloodied head' (fr. 219 *PMGF*). The Dokimasia Painter (460s, Prag A6 and C21) shows her holding an axe while assisting the sword-bearing Aegisthus's attack on Agamemnon, and raising it to prevent the sword-bearing Orestes' attack on Aegisthus. At least one

early depiction, however (see Prag A1–3) shows her using a sword against Agamemnon, and *Odyssey* 11.424 may imply this. Aeschylus's few direct scriptions suggest a sword (Fraenkel 1950, Appendix B, reiterated by Sommerstein 1989 against Davies 1987), so that the weapon she uses against Agamemnon is matched with the weapon Orestes uses against her (*Cho.* 584, 729, *Eum.* 42, 592).

161b. the bitter †*plan of your journey*† from Troy: this should refer to Agamemnon's homecoming (bitter for him because of Clytemnestra's treacherous welcome), and the line should correspond metrically with 144. [A simple solution is to delete βουλᾶς (Hartung), hence 'your bitter journey from Troy', but one expects a reference to the homecoming rather than the journey, and it is hard to see how βουλᾶς would have intruded. Kovacs prints the transmitted text and translates 'how cruel the plot after your journey from Troy', but ἐκ Τροΐας ὅδου can hardly give this meaning. »» Denniston on 161–2, Donzelli 1993.281f.]

162–3. Not with ribbands etc.: head-bands and wreaths adorned military and athletic victors (cf. 870–2, 880–8). **ἐπί** governs both nouns 'in common' (*schêma apo koinou*: KG 1.550, Breitenbach 1934.212, Wilamowitz on *HF* 237; cf. 995, 1351).

164–5. but with a two-edged sword etc.: ξίφεσι is plural for singular, giving a pathetic resonance with the preceding plurals. The phrasing at first sight suggests that Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon with a sword rather than an axe (160–1 n.), especially since ἀμφίτομος describes her sword in A. *Ag.* 1495f. ~ 1519f. (the word appears only in these passages and *Hipp.* 1375, and occasionally in later poetry). But in what follows the sword seems to have been used by Aegisthus to mutilate Agamemnon's body. If so, the point is that instead of adorning her husband's body as a victor (162f.) Clytemnestra allowed its mutilation. [For **λώβαν θεμένα imposing...mutilation** cf. S. *Trach.* 996 οἵαν μ' ἄρ' ἔθου λώβαν 'what mutilation you have imposed upon me!'. Denniston suggested 'making you the piteous victim of Aegisthus' sword', but as Kovacs notes, the word-order is against this and λώβη cannot mean 'victim of mutilation'. Kovacs favours Bothe's Αἰγίσθῳ 'for Aegisthus' sake', arguing that the genitive would mean 'committing grim devastation upon Aegisthus', but the dative might equally be taken as an indirect object. »» Donzelli 1993.283f., Kovacs 1996.100f.]

166. she took a guileful husband: for **ἔσχεν took** see 40 n. This sounds incongruous, but Aegisthus's guile is stressed as a sign of his inadequacy (8–10 n.), and Electra will dwell on his inferiority to Agamemnon as a husband (916f., 925–35, 1081f.). The contrast between the returning hero Agamemnon and the stay-at-home Aegisthus is traditional, e.g. Hes. fr. 176 (Αἰγίσθῳ παρέλεκτο καὶ εἵλετο χείρον' ἀκοίτην, 'she lay with Aegisthus and chose an inferior husband'), A. *Ag.* 1258f., 1625–7, *Cho.* 905–7. There is also a hint that Clytemnestra bought Aegisthus's sexual favours with her treachery (cf. 1089–

90 n.). Electra will return to Clytemnestra's 'murderous wedlock' at the end of the parodos (211f.), as will the Chorus at the end of the first stasimon (479–81).

167–212. Parodos (Chorus entry)

A sung exchange (*amoibaion*), its two halves matched metrically and subdivided between the Chorus and Electra. *Strophe*: the young women invite Electra to join the festival of Hera; she refuses. *Antistrophe*: they urge her to overcome her grief and honour the gods; she replies that the gods have no care for her. In *Hypsipyle* F 752f–h the Chorus arrives similarly, inviting the enslaved princess Hypsipyle to view the Argive army on its way to Thebes, and try to console her in her isolation. The parodos of Sophocles' *Electra* is longer and more intense as the chorus vainly advises Electra to moderate her desperate grief.

The parodos is linked metrically with the monody. Strophe and antistrophe open with a pair of dactylic lines before reverting to aeolic (cf. 112–66 n.: Dale 1981.93–5, Donzelli 1995a.76f., Di Poli 2011.129–31). The Chorus's animated mood is suggested by their rhythms and words. In 169f. verbal repetition *(anadiplosis)* and accumulated compound adjectives give a taste of Euripides' 'New Musical' style (432–86 n.). According to a later anecdote, in 404 B.C. the Spartan and allied generals were persuaded not to raze Athens and enslave the population by hearing this parodos sung at a symposium (Plutarch, *Lysander* 15.3).

The Chorus is marginal to the action of the play, occupying less than one-sixth of the text and singing alone only in the first two stasima and during the murder of Clytemnestra. Here it contributes only sixteen lines. But it is dramatically important, like the Peasant, in forming part of the mundane background to Electra's unnatural state of extended mourning, 'exile' and unconsummated marriage. Unlike the married women of Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes*, this chorus consists of *parthenoi*, local girls of marriageable age, who will join with others of their age-group in singing and dancing at Hera's festival (173f.). The term *numphai* 'brides' (179) means only that the dancers are nubile and will soon be brides (Calame 2001.26). Electra's calling them *gunaikes*, 'women' (215, 694) need not imply that they are married (cf. e.g. S. *Trach.* 225, 385, 663, 673 where the chorus's unmarried state is important). Nor does their calling her 'child' (197) in their role as sympathetic advisers necessarily suggest that they are older than she is. Their status as *parthenoi* is significant since it both aligns and contrasts them with Electra, who is still a virgin both physically and psychologically (311, 945) but is alienated from the normal activities of girls preparing for marriage. This alienation is emphasized by her self-exclusion from the maiden-choruses (*partheneia*) which were in part an exhibition of the girls' beauty (enhanced by the fine clothing and adornments referred to here) and their readiness for marriage. Her bereavement and humiliation make it impossible for her to play this role (175–89, cf. 310–3: »» Swift 2010.189–91).

The Heraia was the chief annual festival of Hera, patron goddess of Argos and the Argive plain. It was celebrated at the Heraion between Argos and Mycenae, and was also known as Hecatombaia ('hundred-oxen festival') because of its massive animal sacrifice and subsequent feast. Young men competed in military and athletic contests, a procession escorted Hera's priestess in an ox-cart from Argos to the shrine (as in the story of Cleobis and Biton, Hdt. 1.31), and girls of marriageable age *(parthenoi)* presented a new robe to Hera. The goddess's cult-statue represented her as Zeus's wife, and the rites may have included, as at Athens, a *hieros gamos* or 'sacred marriage' celebrating their union. The description here mentions only the procession, the girls' choruses and the sacrifice, but these are enough to evoke Hera's function of validating the institution of marriage and socially confirmed childbearing. Electra's situation is set against these normalities. In Aeschylus's *Oresteia* allusions to Zeus Teleios and Hera Teleia (*Ag.* 972–4, *Eum.* 213f.) emphasize Clytemnestra's transgression of the norms of marriage. »» Farnell 1896.205–19, 244–6, 249f., Zeitlin 1970, Burkert 1983. 161–8, 1985.131–5, Pötscher 1996–7, Hall 1997.104–6, Clark 1998, Calame 2001.113–23. Zeitlin and Pötscher discuss the significance of Hera and the Heraia within the play.

168. this rustic dwelling: ἀγροτεῖραν is a noun used adjectivally (139 n.).

170. milk-drinking, mountain-going: the upland herdsman, like the Cyclops or Herodotus's Massagetic and Libyan nomads (Hdt. 1.216, 4.186), lives off his livestock ('milk, cheese and mutton', *Cyc.* 122).

171–4. proclaiming a sacrifice: the sacrifice was the purpose and climax of most Greek festivals for gods. **the third day from this**: counted inclusively, i.e. the day after tomorrow.

175–7. No fineries etc.: lit. 'not for fineries...nor for golden necklaces have I, wretched, taken flight in my heart'. Denniston's interpretation, 'My heart beats fast, but not at the thought of finery or golden necklaces', is unjustified. Aristophanes plays with metaphorical 'taking flight' in *Birds* 431–3, 1436–50. **golden necklaces** have sexual as well as festive connotations (Buxton 1982.38), and Electra's sexual deprivation may be hinted at here.

178–80. nor shall I take my place etc.: isolation from choral dancing sums up Electra's suffering as it does for the exiled Helen and Iphigenia and the enslaved Hecuba (*Hel.* 1465–70, *IT* 1143ff., *Tro.* 149–52). **brides (νύμφαι):** i.e. prospective brides; see above, 167–212 n. **and stamp my whirling foot:** ἐ(ι)λίσσειν is a common term, favoured by Euripides, for circular choral dancing (Calame 2001.34–6, Csapo 1999–2000.422, 2003.73). For the foot-stamping cf. *HF* 1304, *Tro.* 545, *IA* 1043, Theocr. 18.7 (ἐγκροτεῖν).

[L's reading in 178 is impossible since στᾶσα is intransitive 'standing'. Reiske's οὐδ' ἱστᾶσα 'arranging/leading dances' (as the group's leader) is unlikely since Electra's concern is with participating rather than leading. For the dative **χοροῖς in choruses** cf. *IT* 1143, Ar. *Thesm.* 1029–31 (= Eur. *Andro-*

meda F 122.1–3). In view of the last of these, Platnauer's ἐνσταίην in *IT* 1143 and Diggle's οὐδ' ἐνστᾶσα here are probably not needed: »» Alonge 2012.]

188–9. and for Troy which does not forget etc.: 'A victor who demeans himself demeans also the vanquished, who are regarded henceforth as having yielded to an unworthy foe...Here the idea is extended to include the victor's daughter' (Denniston, comparing *Cyc.* 198–200, *Hipp.* 976–80 etc.).

190. Great is the goddess: too great to be safely neglected, cf. *Hipp.* 103, *Hel.* 1355–7.

190–2. come now and borrow etc.: a mundane detail, cf. Ar. *Eccl.* 446–50, Plaut. *Men.* 656–60, and especially Ar. *Lys.* 1180–93 and Theocr. 2.74 (with Gow's commentary) for clothing and jewellery borrowed on religious occasions. On casual borrowing (especially by women) in Greek and other peasant and petty bourgeois communities see Millett 1984.98f. **golden adornments etc.:** lit. 'golden additions (**προσθήματα**) to the charms (**χάρισιν**) of the (robes') finery'. [L's χάρισαι makes an abrupt parenthesis ('gratify (me)'), and one expects a dative (**χάρισιν**) with **προσθήματα** rather than genitive **ἀγλαΐας**.]

194–8. Do you suppose etc.: Sophocles' chorus reproaches Electra similarly: 'wailing and entreating will not raise Agamemnon from the dead; your eternal lamenting has taken you beyond a reasonable limit and into inescapable pain; there is no resolution of your evils; why do you yearn for the unbearable?' (S. *El.* 137–44). Their opinion highlights Electra's special position, but is not necessarily the right one; in both plays Electra is about to be released from her grief on her own terms. Lloyd 1986.6f. compares the misplaced consolations in *Andr.* 126ff., *Alc.* 1072ff., *Med.* 148ff.; see also *Alexander* F 43–6, *Dictys* F 332, *Wise Melanippe* F 507, all urging a mother to accept the death of a son (or sons) who has actually survived.

199–201. None of the gods listens etc.: Greek prayers regularly required the gods, or underworld powers (cf. 682 n.), to pay attention (»» Pulleyn 1997.134–6). **nor heeds my father's slaughter:** emphasizing that the gods are also neglecting to enforce justice by punishing Agamemnon's killers (cf. 583–4 n.).

205. a hireling hearth: temporary housing for a free man hiring out his labour in poverty or exile (»» West on Hes. *Works* 602). For **θῆσσαν** and **χερνῆσι** see 139 n.

209. an exile from my ancestral home: exiled from her *oikos* (household and family) no less than Orestes. In *Choephori* she is 'exiled' even when she still lives in her father's palace (A. *Cho.* 132, 254, 337).

211. sharing a bloodstained bed: Sophocles' Electra paints this picture more fully, S. *El.* 272–6.

213–4. Many are the evils etc.: lit. 'For many evils does Helen bear responsibility to the Greeks etc.'. The characters and crimes of Clytemnestra and her sister were traditionally linked (*Odyssey* 11.436–9, Hes. fr. 176, Stes. fr. 223 *PMGF*, A. *Ag.* 1453–67). The comparison can be inferred here, cf. 479–81, 1062–6, *Or.* 249f. Helen's elopement caused the Trojan War and led to all the

evils Electra has been lamenting. Her guilt is often extended in this way, e.g. *Odyssey* 14.68–71, A. *Ag.* 1455–9, E. *Andr.* 248, *Hec.* 943–951, *Tro.* 1213–5, *IT* 439–46, *Or.* 130f. On the revelation of her innocence at the end of the play see 1280–3 n. »» Aélion 1983.2.343–8.

215–431. First Episode. Orestes *incognito*

215–99 Dialogue of Orestes and Electra, 300–38 Speech of Electra with appeal for Orestes' aid, 339–66 Dialogue of Orestes, Electra and the Peasant, who offers hospitality, 367–400 Speech of Orestes praising the Peasant's nobility, 401–31 Dialogue of Electra and the Peasant, who is sent to find the Old Man. For the general impact of this episode see Introduction, pp. 5–8.

215–99. *Dialogue of Orestes and Electra.* The core of the scene is a stichomythic (line-by-line) dialogue, a device found in all Greek tragedies and with increasing frequency and length in Euripides' later plays. Stylized and strict in form, stichomythia naturally takes on the character of a verbal fencing-match and was effective in scenes of persuasion, interrogation (as here), recognition, plotting, and agitated discussion or dispute. *Electra* shares with other 'recognition-and-intrigue' tragedies the use of stichomythia for the pre-recognition dialogue (220–89), recognition (547–81), plotting (612–84), and culmination of the plot (1111–31). »» Schwinge 1968, Seidensticker 1971, Collard 1980 (with supplement, 2007), Rutherford 2012.164–79.

The stichomythia moves from one topic to the next in sections of eight to ten lines each, usually hinged by a transitional line or couplet: initial confrontation (220ff.), Orestes' condition (228ff.), Electra's condition (237ff.), her 'marriage' (246ff.), her husband (253ff.), Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (264ff.), her desire to assist Orestes' revenge (272ff.), the problem of recognition (283ff.), Agamemnon's tomb (288–9, prompting Orestes' emotional reaction). The last two topics prepare for Electra's ensuing speech and the recognition process. Like other Euripidean stichomythiai in which an arriving ally gets orientation from those in trouble (e.g. *Hec.* 758–86, *HF* 538–61), this passage repeats many points from the introductory scenes and completes a structural 'ring', reinforcing essential facts and emotions as a new phase of action begins. Dramatic ironies come thick and fast. The disguised Orestes speaks in words that fit the real Orestes. Electra unwittingly does the same, or pathetically complains of the threat from the 'stranger' and her brother's absence. The effect is both humorous and touching, as in several Euripidean recognition scenes and in another precursor of this scene, the encounter of Odysseus with Laertes which ends with Odysseus overcome by emotion and casting off his pretence (*Od.* 24.318–20). Euripides tempts us to expect the same outcome: three times Electra's words arouse urgent emotion in Orestes, he sighs (ὄπαπαῖ) and says something to cover his discomposure, she assures the 'stranger' that

Orestes is far away, and the subject changes (243–7, 261–5, 281–3). Orestes persists in his disguise even when he is assured of the loyalty of the Peasant (262) and the Chorus (273), and of Electra's cooperation (281). »» Solmsen 1967.9–14, Schwinge 1968.252–61, 295–317, Donzelli 1978.73–135, Lloyd 1986.11–13. See also 487–584 n.

Staging. Electra sees Orestes and his companions emerging from their cover (107–11 n., 216–7 n.) and in terror bids the Chorus flee **down the track**, i.e. along one of the *eisodoi* (218: Euripides teases the audience by suggesting an unconventional chorus exit: Arnott 1973.53f.). She makes for the house-door, but Orestes cuts her off (220). Taking this as aggression, she appeals to, and perhaps dodges towards, Apollo (221). Orestes again tries to stop her, and she still resists (222–4) but becomes calm enough to realize she must comply (225–7). All this contrasts pathetically and humorously with Orestes' simple emergence and declaration in *Choephori* 212ff.

215. my laments are ended: lit. 'I have exited from my laments'.

216–7. lurking at the altar: lit. 'having at-the-hearth lairs'. **ἑρεστίους** would normally mean 'at home', 'belonging to the home', or (for guests and suppliants) 'visiting the home'. Diggle 1981.33f. suggests that it refers here to an altar next to the image of Apollo *aguieus* outside the house, and illustrates the familiarity of such images and altars on the Athenian stage.

218. you down the track: the singular **σό** refers to the Chorus as a whole (plural **γοναῖκες** in 215). Such alternations are common, e.g. 175 ~ 184.

220. Wait, foolish woman: τάλαινα probably has this colloquial sense here, expressing mild impatience at Electra's misunderstanding; cf. *IT* 805 with my note.

221. O Phoebus Apollo etc.: the whole line is addressed to the god; she is fleeing Orestes, not supplicating him.

226. you'll accept what I say: lit. 'you'll not say differently'.

227. I'm yours anyway etc.: dramatic irony; he is in fact her *kyrios* (259–60 nn.).

228. words that come from your brother: a studied ambiguity.

229. O dearest one: again truer than she knows. **And is he alive or dead:** the participles **ζῶντος** and **τεθνηκότος** agree with **κασιγνήτου** in 228. She has assumed Orestes is alive (202) but now thinks the 'messenger' may be about to report his death. Orestes reports his own death to Clytemnestra in *Choephori*, and to Electra in S. *Electra*. In *IT* 704f he asks Pylades to report his death at Argos, thinking he is really about to die.

232. I'll make that a gift etc.: again more valid for Orestes than his 'messenger'.

233. Where...is he bearing his burden etc.: lit. 'Where...is that sufferer keeping his suffering exile'. **ἔχων** agrees with the implied subject of **ζᾷ** (230). The repetition **τλήμων...τλήμονας** is used for pathos; on this figure *(parêgmenon)* in tragedy see Denniston on 337.

234. wandering from city to city: lit. 'using not (just) one city's usage'.

238. and...in what condition: lit. 'and how...you are keeping (in terms) of condition'. The word συμφορά can have a medical connotation (cf. *Alc.* 1047f.,

Willink on *Or.* 153f.); this can hardly be foremost in Orestes' question but is reflected in Electra's reply. [Text and idiom: Diggle 1981.34f.]

239. withered: ξηρὸν is lit. 'dry', presumably from hard work and malnutrition as well as her ceaseless mourning; but it may also suggest the dryness associated with sexual inactivity (cf. 44 n., Hippocr. *Mul.* 1.2).

241. razor-shorn: lit. 'Scythian-cut with a razor'. σκυθίζω or ἀποσκυθίζω (cf. *Tro.* 1026) could also denote scalping. Electra has 'torn' her head (150).

247. a fatal marriage: the forced marriage complemented Aegisthus's attempts to kill Orestes. Later Electra will claim that it effectively killed her (1092f.). 'By her marriage she is 'dead' to her family, to her city, and to herself' (Zeitlin 1970.650 n. 21). Her perpetual virginity may also evoke the image of 'marriage with death', the early death of a girl which prevents her from achieving marriage and childbearing (e.g. *IA* 461, S. *Ant.* 816; Lattimore 1962.192–4). Euripides converts the image for the deaths of boys, *Med.* 985, *HF* 481–4 (cf. Lattimore 193). »» Seaford 1987, Rehm 1994, Rutherford 2012.144–6.

249. Not one my father once hoped etc.: she alludes to the Peasant evasively out of shame, prompting Orestes' next question. In 312f. she says she had hoped to marry her cousin Castor, but that seems to be Euripides' invention and could hardly spring to an audience's mind here.

253. poor but noble: πένης (μέν), **γενναῖος** (δέ) (Denniston). For the contrast see 35–8 n.

256. Keeping some religious abstinence: sexual contact was one of many pollutants threatening the *hagneia* (purity) of mortals and gods. »» Parker 1983.74–103 (sex and purity), 147–51 (semantics of ἁγνός), Vernant 1980.110–29.

259. had no right to: lit. 'was not (my) *kyrios*'. A *kyrios* ('master, guardian') exercised authority as head of a family, including the legal rights and responsibilities relating to a girl's betrothal and marriage, which were essentially a transaction between her birth family and the family to which she was transferred (conditionally) on marriage. »» Lacey 1968.21f., 24, 105f. and Index '*Kyrios*', Pomeroy 1975.62–5, Oakley–Sinos 1993.9f.

260. in case Orestes should punish him: Orestes would become Electra's *kyrios* when he reached adulthood. Even before that he would be responsible as a brother for protecting her honour (»» Lavelle 1986.321–5).

265. Women are friends to their husbands etc.: Electra cynically suggests that sexual attachment outweighs motherly love. The natural strength of the latter is often proclaimed in tragedy, e.g. *Pho.* 355f., *IA* 917f., S. *El.* 770f.; similarly parental love in general, e.g. *Andr.* 418–20, *HF* 632–6, *Pho.* 956. Andromache indignantly rejects a suggestion like Electra's, *Tro.* 665f. But Electra considers her mother a corrupt woman (921–4, 1072f.).

268. So that you could not bear sons etc.: cf. 22–3 n.

272. These women...are friendly to you: the Chorus is predictably sympathetic, like most of the ten choruses in extant tragedies whose complicity is obtained or assumed (see Barrett on *Hipp.* 710–2) and sometimes excitingly exploited (esp. A. *Cho.* 766–82, E. *Ion* 666f., 756ff., *IT* 1052–77, 1284–1301, 1431–4).

This is not just a way of explaining the Chorus's silence; it highlights Orestes' crucial question, and identifies the Chorus with his and Electra's false expectations. »» Aélion 1983.2.101–3.

273. what you and I say: lit. 'my (τὰ ἐμὰ) and your (σὰ) words'.

277. [as †*our father*† were dared by his enemies: despite the arguments of Slings 1997.141–3, ἐτολμήθη can hardly mean 'had dared against him'. Probably πατήρ is corrupt due to abbreviation, misreading or misunderstanding of the syntax. Suggested corrections: 'were dared once by his enemies' (Nauck), 'were dared by our father's enemies' (Broadhead), 'were dared against our father' (Winnington-Ingram).]

279–82. Yes, with the very same axe that killed our father: lit. 'by which our father perished'; **τῷ** is the definite article (originally a demonstrative) used as a relative, as commonly in epic and occasionally in tragedy for metrical reasons (»» Diggle 1981.75). **May I die etc.:** revenge will make her life complete. the Aeschylean Orestes' wish (*Cho.* 438) is now expressed by Electra; cf. 663 (the Old Man) and similar phrasing in A. *Sept.* 636, *Ag.* 1610, Eur. *Hec.* 1274, *Or.* 1100. **shed...in vengeance:** the verb ἐπισφάζω has sacrificial connotations; its prefix can imply 'in addition' (*HF* 602, 995) or 'upon (altar or hands)' (92, *Hec.* 505, *Stheneboea* F 661.18), or both (*Or.* 1596). Here it seems to suggest that Clytemnestra's slaughter will both balance Agamemnon's and be like a placatory sacrifice at his tomb.

Nothing Electra has said previously has foreshadowed these bloodthirsty responses. This is important for her characterization, but Orestes' replies are not necessarily shocked or hesitant. **Ah, if only Orestes were nearby hearing this** may well express admiration rather than anxiety (**φεῦ, Ah!** as in 262: cf. 215–99 n.). For a different opinion see Slater 2003.27 n. 63 and his discussion cited below on 294–6.

283. I would not know him etc.: cf. A. *Cho.* 225 (Orestes), 'looking on my very self you are slow to recognize me.'

285–7. There's only one of my friends etc.: these lines suggest that the summoning of the Old Man (already introduced at 16–18) will somehow lead to the recognition. Such signposting encourages an audience to watch for how it will actually happen.

289. He got what he got: such vague tautologies are euphemistic, sometimes ominous, e.g. 85, 1122, *Tro.* 630f., *IA* 649, S. *OC* 335f. »» Johnstone 1980). Electra's reply is enough to alarm Orestes even though he has already visited Agamemnon's tomb. In A. *Cho.* 429–50 the Chorus stresses that citizens and family were prevented from mourning Agamemnon, and adds the gruesome detail of *maschalismos* (mutilation: cf. S. *El.* 444–6). Euripides leaves this to our imagination, except for Electra's complaints about the abuse of the tomb, 323–31.

290–2. Alas, what a thing you've said etc.: emotion again makes it hard for Orestes to maintain his disguise (cf. 244, 262, 282, 220–89 n.), and again his reply insists that Orestes is far away. He explains his concern by saying that the

pity he feels is what any decent person would feel. This leads him to the afterthought in 294–6. His and the Chorus's comments encourage Electra to make her appeal to this 'stranger' in the speech that follows. **Awareness...of others' troubles etc.:** cf. *Andr.* 421f., 'Misfortunes bring pity even from those unconnected with them.'

294–6. Pity is nowhere found etc.: the distinction between **ignorance (ἀμαθίᾳ)** or σκαιότης ('gaucheness') and **discerning men (σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδράσιν)**, i.e. those who are properly educated or 'wise', recurs crucially in Orestes' and Castor's criticisms of Apollo, 971f., 1245f., 1302; cf. *Hcld.* 458–60, *Supp.* 911–7, *HF* 298–301, *Ino* F 407, Soph. F 924. In Greek thought intelligence is an important determinant of moral capacity. Pity (*oiktos, eleos*) requires empathy with someone else's suffering. Intelligence and education give one the sensitivity to feel pity or compunction *(aidôs)* and show moderation (*sôphrosynê*) where appropriate. »» Dover 1974.116–24 (intelligence and morality), Konstan 2001.49ff., 2006. 201ff. (pity). **yet there's a downside too etc.:** lit. 'yes, and it's not without penalty either'; for the force of καὶ γὰρ see *GP* 109f. The downside is a sensitive person's inhibition from acting decisively or ruthlessly (Slater 2003). The remark foreshadows Orestes' reluctance to go through with the matricide at the crucial moment, where Electra taunts him with being 'seized by pity' (967ff.). [Lines 294–6 should not be deleted, nor moved to precede 292–3 as Bothe and others proposed.]

300–38. *Electra's speech.* The speech moves from Electra (304–13) to her hated mother (314–8), to the usurper Aegisthus, Clytemnestra's partner in murder (318–22), and so to Agamemnon and his tomb (323–331) and the appeal to Orestes for action (332–8). It resembles other Euripidean speeches in which a suffering character appeals to a recently arrived ally after providing information in a stichomythia (*Med.* 708–18, *Andr.* 920–53, *Supp.* 163–92, *Or.* 449–55, and with novel preparation *IA* 900–16). The appeal typically occurs in the first few lines but here is sketched at the beginning (**I beseech you etc.**) and resumed at the end. The speech builds towards the topic of the tomb as the main basis for Electra's demand for action from Orestes. Her private grievances are aired for the same purpose (cf. Lloyd 1986.8), but with a venom that suggests they fuel her hatred of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Contrast the equivalent speech in S. *Electra* (254–309), framed as an explanation of the pressures that drive Electra to express her grief. These two speeches share a number of motifs: justification of speaking, (300–3 ~ 254–60), usurpation of Agamemnon's property and position by his killers (315–22 ~ 266–74), their gloating insults to his memory (323–31 ~ 277–81), the need for Orestes' return (331–8 ~ 303–6).

300–3. I'm ready to tell you etc.: for the optative **λέγοιμ' ἄν** cf. 1060 (again 'permitting' herself to speak out) and e.g. *Hec.* 1132, *Supp.* 465, *IT* 811, 939, *Or.* 640. Electra says, in effect, 'I won't refuse to tell my and my father's troubles to *you*, since you're a friend of our family. And please report what I say to *Orestes,* since these troubles are as much his as mine'. [For the punctu-

ation of 300f. (χρὴ δὲ...λέγειν not taken as a parenthesis as by Murray and others) see Battezzato 2001.]

304. the kind of clothes I must lie in: she wears the same clothes night and day. [αὐλίζομαι, lit. 'sleep in the yard' (αὐλή), suggests sleeping rough, but not necessarily like an animal as Denniston implies. The verb (and compounds ἐν-, κατ-) often refers to troops bivouacking (e.g. Hdt. 8.9.4, 9.15, Thuc. 3.91, 3.96.1, 6.7.2) or other rough overnighting (e.g. Hdt. 1.181.5, 9.37.3, 9.93.1, S. *Phil.* 30, 33).]

307. working the shuttle etc.: lit. 'toiling out clothes with shuttles'. A well-to-do wife in classical Athens (let alone a legendary princess) would leave the routine wool-working to slaves although she would have learned it as a child and done it as a wife when it suited her: cf. Xen. *Oec.* 7.6, *Lac. Pol.* 1.3 (»» Lacey 1968, Index 'Wool work', Lewis 2002.59–64). In tragedy weaving can symbolize both the unspoiled life of the Trojan women before their capture (*Tro.* 199f.) and a slave-woman's drudgery (*Hec.* 364f.).

[**308. or else etc.:** this awkwardly phrased line is probably an interpolation. Without it the rhetorical repetition of **myself** in 307 and 309 is more effective and 307 can imply (plausibly) that Electra makes clothes for her husband as well as herself. If the line is genuine, some further text indicating what she **will be deprived** of may have been lost as Page and Diggle suppose, or it is corrupt.]

310. missing festive rites etc.: lit. 'unfestivalled of rituals'; such pleonastic phrasing belongs to the high poetic diction of tragedy, cf. 1130, KG 1.401f., Breitenbach 1934.192f. [Some editors begin a new sentence with 310 rather than 311. The absence of a connective is surprising either way, but perhaps less so in 311. Beginning at 307 (Wilamowitz 1875.64) makes an unwieldy sentence. Deleting 311–3 (see below) would eliminate the problem.]

311. I refuse women's company etc.: Electra, it seems, is embarrassed to keep company with married women because she is not truly a married woman herself; she is in a limbo between maidenhood and marriage. But there are difficulties of text and sense in this and the next two lines, and all three might be an interpolation (Steinberg 1864.27–30). Without them Clytemnestra's luxurious lifestyle (314–8) is contrasted sharply with Electra's poverty and isolation (304–10). [**ἀναίνομαι** means 'say no to something' (as opposed to αἰνέω 'accept', approve': cf. Wilamowitz on *HF* 632), hence 'reject', 'refuse', 'deny', or in a legal sense 'disown'. With a participle (rarely: A. *Ag.* 583, E. *HF* 1235, cf. 1124, *Ba.* 251, *IA* 1503, Dio Chr. 3.73) it means 'resent', 'regret', 'dislike' doing something. L's ἀναίνομαι...γυμνὰς οὖσα παρθένος gives very unlikely sense, 'I resent/dislike being a naked maiden'. Triclinius's **γυναῖκας** gives lit. 'I reject/rebuff women, being a maiden' (for ἀναίνομαι with personal object cf. Hom. *Il.* 9.679, *Od.* 8.212), but the suggestion that she actively rejects women's company is a little surprising. Denniston suggested reading αἰσχύνομαι in 311 as well as 312, but it is unlikely that ἀναίνομαι would have replaced it in both lines. Kovacs accepts Kirchhoff's ἀναίνομαι...γυμνὰς οὖσα

παρθένους 'I reject/rebuff maidens, being naked'), i.e. she is reluctant to attend maiden-choruses since she has no decent clothes; but that is difficult to extract from the Greek. »» Denniston, Kovacs 1985.306–10 (with response by Seaford 1985.319 n. 38), Distilo.]

312–3. and feel shame before Castor etc.: the idea that Castor wooed Electra is presumably Euripides' invention, if these lines are authentic. The recently deified Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces ('sons of Zeus' by his mating with Leda) were brothers of Helen and Clytemnestra and uncles of Electra and Orestes. For their history see Gantz 1993.323–8. In Athenian society of Euripides' time an uncle might well marry a niece. The Dioscuri will be important in the ending of the play, their trouble-free divinity being contrasted with the sufferings of their human relatives (see 1233–7 n.). Their nobility is contrasted with the crimes of their sisters, 746, 1064. [L's second ἀναίνομαι ('I reject/ rebuff Castor') should probably be replaced by Denniston's **αἰσχύνομαι**. Some editors have understood ᾧ...ἔμ' ἐμνήστευον as 'to whom they (i.e. my parents or family) betrothed me', but μνηστεύω means 'woo', not 'betrothe'. Scaliger retained L's text almost unaltered with Κάστορ(ε) ὦ as dual forms ('Castor and his twin who...'); for this interpretation see Kovacs 1985.308f. (seconded by Distilo), and note the similar conjecture of Slings on 1064.]

314–7. My mother meanwhile etc.: this picture of Clytemnestra corrupted by oriental luxury anticipates her entry at 998ff. (where she almost apologizes for it). Luxury is commonly linked with tyranny and hybris, e.g. Thuc. 1.130 on the Spartan king Pausanias perverted by a Persian lifestyle. **sits on a throne** recalls A. *Cho.* 975, 'stately they (Aegisthus and Clytemnestra) were then, seated on their thrones'. **Phrygian** is contemptuous ('oriental', 'barbarian'), perhaps with allusion to the Persian satrapy of Phrygia (Willink 1986.xlv, Hall 1989.38–40 and Index 'Phrygia'). **Idaean robes** (cf. 4 n.) are likewise luxurious, in contrast with Electra's rags. The fine quality of woven cloths from Phrygia was well known in Athens by the late 5th century (Miller 1997.55, 75, Stieber 2011.329f.).

318. still my father's blood rots: σέσηπεν (cf. *Iliad* 2.135) has a present-tense meaning expressing the persistence of the rotting process. For such uses of the perfect tense see Wackernagel 1926–8.I.166–8.

321. the sceptre: see 11 n. **with which: ἐν** is 'instrumental' (LSJ 'ἐν' III).

323–5. the tomb of Agamemnon etc.: Electra does not know that Orestes has just made offerings at the tomb (90–3). **libations** were drink-offerings of honey, milk, water, wine or olive-oil poured into the ground. **myrtle** was often used as a sacred decoration both for the living (Aegisthus at his sacrifice, 778; Heracles drinking, *Alc.* 759) and for corpses and tombs. The Old Man will offer a wine-libation and decorate Agamemnon's tomb with myrtle, 511f. Prag F7, Pl. 36 shows myrtle decorating the tomb-*stêlê* and steps. **barren,** lit. 'dry', presumably refers to the absence of libations and sacrificial victims' blood, although ἀγλαΐσματα could be any kind of offering (e.g. Orestes' hair-offering, A. *Cho.* 193, S. *El.* 908).

326–8. my mother's husband is one sarcasm, **this glorious (κλεινός) man** another: cf. S. *El.* 300 'that glorious bridegroom who keeps her company'. **they say** means that she is speaking from hearsay (the phrasing 'glorious, as they say' would weaken the irony). **sodden with drink:** a sarcastic contrast with the 'dry' tomb (Lloyd 1990.183). **βρεχθείς** is colloquial and contemptuous (Stevens 1977.12, 67). Aegisthus resembles the suitors in the *Odyssey* in his drunkenness, hybristic behaviour and mistaken sense of impunity. **leaps on the grave:** a pathetic echo of *Iliad* 4.177 where Agamemnon envisages a Trojan leaping on the grave (τύμβῳ ἐπιθρῴσκων) of his wounded brother Menelaus. **and pelts with stones etc.: λεύει** and **λάϊνον** are indignantly juxtaposed and the consonants in the line symmetrically balanced (**πέτροις... λεύει...λάϊνον πατρός**). Stoning the tomb is a substitute for stoning the man, expressing hatred and contempt: cf. *Anth. Pal.* 7.403, Propertius 4.5.77, Ovid *Trist.* 3.11.26. The **memorial** is the pillar *(stêlê)* marking the grave, often placed on a stone platform: see Prag F2–7, *LIMC* III 'Elektra I'. »» Kurtz–Boardman 1971.85–8, 121–41, 218–46.

329. and dares to utter this insult etc.: more τ- and σ- sounds accumulate as Electra spits out her words.

330–1. doing a fine job: καλῶς could just mean 'nobly', but the colloquial 'nicely', 'properly' (cf. 816, 965, Stevens 1977.55) aggravates the sneering tone imputed to Aegisthus. In 331 **παρὼν** ('being here') and **ἀπὼν** ('being absent') are pathetically contrasted as in 245 (cf. 263). [**τόμβῳ** is apposed to **σοι** ('is he defending you, your tomb?') in the so-called *schema ionicum* (apposition of whole and part, or whole and attribute): cf. 1140, *Ba.* 619, Wilamowitz or Bond on *HF* 162.]

333–5. Many are sending it etc.: in *Hec.* 836–40 Hecuba wishes her hands, hair and feet could all voice her complaint to Agamemnon. Here the conceit is awkward and scholars have considered deleting 334–5, or 335 only, or eliminating the reference to Agamemnon. But 336–8 depend on this reference (the son's failure would shame his father's glory), and Electra has made it very clear that she wants Orestes to hear of Agamemnon's humiliation (318–31) as well as her own.

336–8. It's shameful if etc.: a rhetorical argument from an implicit contradiction, like e.g. 1044f., *Hcld.* 503–6, *Andr.* 666f., *HF* 578–82, 1320f. For the appeal to past glories cf. A. *Cho.* 302–4, E. *Hipp.* 976–80, *Supp.* 314–9, *HF* 578–82. Electra expects heroic action from Orestes (cf. 523–5) as Telemachus does from Odysseus (*Od.* 1.163–5), but the iconographic tradition (Prag 1985, ch. 3) regularly implies that Orestes took Aegisthus by surprise, as he does in *Choephori*, in Sophocles' *Electra*, and in this play where he strikes him down from behind (837ff.) without identifying himself. **a better father:** an old contrast between Agamemnon and Aegisthus, cf. 166 n., *Odyssey* 3.250, and for this type of comparison *HF* 207–9, 496.

339–363. *The Peasant's return.* The choral comment and the Peasant's questions cover his approach to the house. He addresses Orestes and his party only at 357ff., while Orestes does not address the Peasant at all. 'This remarkable lack of contact reflects both the farmer's hard-headed suspicions and the young aristocrat's aloofness and naive acceptance of traditional values' (Mastronarde 1979.88, cf. 39).

342, these rustic doors: the door of the cottage, not the farmyard as Hammond (1984.376) suggests. For ἀγραύλους cf. 168 ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν, 'rustic dwelling'.

343–4. For a woman...it's shaming etc.: a common sentiment in Athenian drama, e.g. *Hcld.* 476f., *Andr.* 876–8, probably reflecting a real inhibition with some exaggeration.

345. don't start getting suspicious: lit. 'don't go into suspicions'; the neuter adjective ὕποπτα is used abstractly as in late 5th-century prose style. See LSJ 'ὕποπτος' II.

347–55. The stichomythia between Electra and Orestes reiterated points from earlier in the play (220–89 n.). This brief orientation of the Peasant recapitulates some of that (347–50 ~ 228–30, 352–5 ~ 236–9), while 355f. sums up all of 239–338.

352. That's a matter for hope: the Peasant's question implied 'Is Orestes going to act?' Electra replies that he will if he can. Exiles proverbially 'feed on insubstantial hopes' (Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 1668).

353. what word is it etc.: lit. 'what word have they come conveying?' [L's ἀγορεύοντες could mean 'saying' (LSJ 'ἀγορεύω' 2), but Reiske's **χορεύοντες** (assuming ΑΠ misread as ΑΓ) is likely in view of 237.]

355. some they can see etc.: cf. S. *El.* 1188 (Electra), 'And yet you are seeing but few of my troubles.'

356. they're well aware etc.: lit. 'they have none of these things lacking'.

357. shouldn't our doors have been opened (lit. 'unfolded'): the double doors of the theatre building are a little incongruous for the Peasant's hut, and the word πύλαι has a grandiose ring (Denniston on 341–2; πύλας ἀναπτύσσειν is used of Thoas's palace, *IT* 1286). The incongruity suits the Peasant playing the generous host.

[**360. Lift the baggage etc.:** if genuine, the line is addressed to Orestes' and Pylades' servants (cf. 393f. and above on 82–111, *Staging*). But it is probably an interpolation designed to accompany some added stage business. Barrett's deletion (in Reeve 1973.153) is supported by Bain 1982a.36f. and accepted by Diggle, Kovacs, Donzelli 1991b.110f., Distilo. The objections are that the Peasant should not instruct Orestes' servants, that the instruction has no effect and anticipates Orestes' order at 393f., and that the rest of 358–63 is addressed to Orestes and Pylades. The officiousness perhaps suits the Peasant, and Mastronarde 1979.106 argues that **don't say a word against it** could suggest that the servants react to his order with hesitation or are restrained by a gesture from Orestes and wait for his permission. Distilo however adds that **τεύχη**

should mean 'equipment' (especially armour as in 444) or 'containers' (as in 140, 496) rather than 'baggage'.]

361–3. you're friends etc.: the Peasant's sentiments echo those of Eumaeus welcoming the disguised Odysseus: 'It's not my way to refuse recognition to a visitor, even if one inferior to you were to come...; my giving is little but welcome' (*Od.* 14.56–9). **I may be poor etc.:** cf. 35–8 n.

367–400. *Orestes' speech.* Orestes comments on the Peasant's conduct in terms of a general moral insight. Goodness (he argues) is difficult to identify in a man, for men's natures are not neatly ordered and defined (367–8). It is obviously not correlated with birth or possessions (370–2). So what *is* an accurate indicator? Not wealth indeed, but not poverty either, for that can corrupt; nor performance in battle, for no one can judge such things reliably in such circumstances; on the whole, then, it's best to accept that these things are confused and not rely on any of the conventional criteria (373–9). The Peasant, a man of humble background yet excellent conduct, shows that we should judge a man's virtue through acquaintance with his character and behaviour (380–5); it's men like him who make for a well-ordered community, not unthinking muscle-men who are not even reliable in battle unless they are naturally brave (386–90).

The length, rhetorical style and loose structure of this argument have led some scholars to consider parts of it interpolated. Wilamowitz (1875.190–3) deleted 373–9 and 386–90, assigning 373–9 to *Auge* since 379 appears to have been ascribed to that play by Diogenes Laertius (see note there). Reeve (1973. 151–3) added 368–72 and perhaps 383–5 (which Murray had doubted), thus reducing 367–90 from twenty-four lines to an insignificant four or seven. Wilamowitz's deletions are adopted by Diggle, Kovacs (adding 368–72), and Distilo (adding 383–5). The integrity of the speech is defended by Denniston and at length by Donzelli, Goldhill and Egli, who relate it to the moral themes of the play and the characterization of Orestes and others. Egli notes that the speech is sophistic in its rejection of traditional ideas of nobility and insistence on analysis and logical method (367, 373, 383–5, 390). Moralizing passages in dramatic texts could certainly acquire parallel or related material through a 'snowball' process, either by accident or design (e.g. *Hipp.* 616–37, *Supp.* 901–8, *Andr.* 319–33), but if this occurred here it began early in the history of the text, as 367–79 all appear together, attributed to Euripides, in a late 3rd-century B.C. papyrus (P. Hibeh 7).

The rhetorical structure of 367–90 is shown in the paraphrase above. An observation about the difficulty of identifying virtue is supported by actual examples which lead to the conclusion that no commonly accepted criterion is reliable in principle (379 recalls 368). The point is illustrated by the case of the Peasant, which supports the conclusion that acquaintance is the key to judging men's true qualities and assessing their value to the community. These are common themes in Euripidean rhetoric (see notes below), as is the general message that nobility is a matter of a person's nature, not to be judged through

externals (e.g. *Alexander* F 61b, *Captive Melanippe* F 495.40–3). To some extent the speech can be seen as an edifying set piece commending the moderate values of the democratically-minded members of Euripides' audience (Donzelli compares the characterization of the self-sufficient Peasant here with that of the peasant and the messenger who describes him in *Orestes* 866–70, 917–22). But the questions about character and nobility which the disguised Orestes ponders inevitably point towards the problematic nature of his own projected vengeance and matricide (cf. Introduction, p. 19. »» Donzelli 1978. 229–42, Goldhill 1986a, 1986b.228f., Egli 2003.129 n.1, 163 n. 2, 213, 225–9.

367–8. nothing is precise etc.: the difficulty of knowing a man's moral nature is proverbial and often emphasized by imagining ways of making virtue or vice easy to detect, e.g. *PMG* fr. 889 (an anonymous drinking-song), Theognis 117–28, E. *Med.* 516–9, *HF* 655–73. **virtue:** the word εὐανδρία (found first in Euripides: cf. *Supp.* 913, *HF* 475, F 54, F 1052.5, 7) usually suggests active achievement (military, political etc.). Its use here is part of the speech's challenge to more traditional values.

369–72. I've seen a worthless man etc.: the thought that 'good' parents do not necessarily have 'good' children is repeated by the Old Man with reference to Orestes himself in 550f.; cf. e.g. *Dictys* F 336, Theognis 435–8, Ar. *Rhet.* 1390b.21–4. The traditional assumption that there is such a connection is also often stated, e.g. F 75, F 166–7, F 333. For the disjunction of wealth and virtue cf. 35–8 n., also Sappho fr. 148 LP, Solon fr. 15 *IEG*, Theognis 149f., 315–22, 699f., Bacchyl. 1.161, A. *Ag.* 774–81, E. *HF* 672f. [Reeve argues that **For** in 380 'makes no sense anywhere except after 367', and that 368 is inseparable from 369–72. The second point is valid, but 367 would be no less abrupt without some sententious backing. As for the first, see below on 380–2.]

373–9. By wealth etc.: the repetitiveness of the comment on wealth and marginal relevance of the topic of battle are the main grounds for suspecting this passage. The reference of **them (αὐτὰ)** in 373 is also unclear. On the other hand, this dwelling on distinctions and criteria is not inappropriate in the context (cf. Goldhill 1986a.168). **A faulty guide:** πονηρός is used as in 52.

375–6. Yet poverty's unhealthy etc.: a proverbial thought, e.g. Theognis 386–92, 649–52; but it was equally traditional to say that one should resist the temptations brought by poverty, e.g. *Odyssey* 14.156f. In *Supp.* 240–3 Theseus distinguishes the truly poor who have no livelihood and are politically restless from those who, like the conservative Peasant, are not rich but have enough to live on (Donzelli 1978.233).

377–8. Yet who when facing an enemy's spears etc.: Theseus makes this point more fully in *Supp.* 846–56 (see Collard there). In democratic Athens military achievement and war deaths were celebrated communally, in part because in hoplite fighting all are face to face with the enemy's spears and all efforts are interrelated. The old traditions of awards for excellence (*aristeia,* e.g. Hdt. 8.123) and calling on witnesses to one's valour (e.g. *HF* 176–87) were in

question. Pericles' Funeral Speech does not name a single name. Aeschines 3.183–5 is a later statement of this ideal.

379. It's best to let these things go etc.: i.e. 'best not to trust these criteria', not 'best to give up the search for criteria'; there is no contradiction between this and the assertion of a positive criterion in 383–5. An anecdote in Diogenes Laertius 2.33 alleges that Socrates left the theatre in disgust on hearing this dismissal of the search for virtue, but that is a misinterpretation, probably due to the quotation of a small part of the speech in anthologies etc. [That Diogenes ascribed this line to Euripides' *Auge* is suggested only by the reading of one derivative ms. (N: ἐν τῇ αὐγῃ), but it may be a correct conjecture since the readings of the main mss. (ἐν τῇ αὐτῃ or ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ) hardly make sense. On this whole issue see Distilo 645–8 (but her justification of the reading ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ is implausible). If Diogenes did refer to *Auge* that may be just a mistake, or Euripides may have used the same line twice. It is not a strong ground for ascribing the whole of 373–9 to *Auge* as Wilamowitz did.]

380–2. For this man etc.: an example illustrating the preceding generalizations. For γάρ so used see *GP* 66f.

383–5. Will you not cease etc.: exhortation *(parainesis)* of a hypothetical audience sums up the moralizing incisively: cf. *Supp.* 744ff., 949ff., Stevens on *Andr.* 622–3, Fraenkel 1968. [**οὐ μή** with future indicative (or perhaps occasionally subjunctive) expresses a strong prohibition, often followed as here by a contrasting clause giving a preferred course (Denniston on 982–4, *SMT* §§297–300).] **men's company and their conduct:** i.e. acquaintance with them and the knowledge of their character that this brings. The moral influence of 'company' (ὁμιλία) is often stressed in Greek ethics, e.g. Theognis 1.31–8, Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.19–20, Ar. *Nic.Eth.* 1172a.8ff., and often mentioned in Euripides. For judging a man by the company he keeps cf. F 812.4–6 with the comments of Aeschines 1.153 citing that fragment. »» Donzelli 1978.233–7.

386–90. It's men of this kind etc.: many (including myself: Cropp 1988.125) have doubted the relevance of this coda, but it coheres with Orestes' assertion that true nobility is a matter of right thinking and moral virtue. Why is this so important? Because it is vital to a community's political and social welfare (**cities** and **homes**). This theme was famously set out by Xenophanes (fr. 2 *IEG*) a century earlier. It appears elsewhere in Euripides, especially *Antiope* F 199–201 (from the debate between Amphion and Zethus about active and contemplative lives) and *Autolycus* F 282 (a tirade against athletes); cf. S. *Ajax* 1250–2. **fleshbags devoid of brains**: i.e. those devoted to physical training, cf. F 201. **ornaments of the town square:** cf. F 282 'they (i.e. athletes) go about as ornaments of the city'. **ἀγάλματ' ἀγορᾶς** probably alludes to their statuesque physique, though Slings suggests it means 'the sort of thing the man in the street is proud of'. 'Statue' is a special meaning of the word ἄγαλμα, and successful athletes were amongst those commemorated by statues in public places. Greek statues of both gods and men emphasized physical perfection. **Even in battle etc.:** the distinction between physical prowess and courage is at

least as old as Tyrtaeus fr. 12 *IEG* (courage the highest-ranking endowment, essential for young men if they are to excel in war). »» Donzelli 1978.239–41, Slings 1997.147f., Egli 128f., 286–90.

391. he who is here etc.: playing on the fact that Orestes' 'messenger' is Orestes himself.

396–400. [So I commend etc.: Reeve proposed to delete these lines also, or to place 396–8 before 391 and delete 399–400, noting that 393–5 seem to make a conclusion to the speech and that Electra has not been told of Apollo's oracle. But Euripides may have overlooked her ignorance for the sake of the continuing dramatic irony. The oracle is never explained to her, yet she is aware of it at 972 and it is taken for granted in the concluding scenes. It is hard to see a motive for interpolation, or what other context these lines could suit. »» Goldhill 1986a.169f.]

397–8. and yet I could wish your brother etc.: another ambiguous reference to himself, and an echo of the disguised Orestes' words to Clytemnestra in *Choephori*: 'I for my part (μὲν οὖν) could wish (ἂν ἤθελον) it were for some welcome news that I was receiving recognition and hospitality from such prosperous (εὐδαίμοσιν) hosts.' [For the syntax of **ἐβουλόμην δ' ἂν εἰ** see *SMT* §246.]

399–400. Loxias' decrees etc.: another echo of *Choephori*, where Orestes proclaims his trust in Apollo's guidance (*Cho.* 269f., cf. 297, 900–3, 1029f., *Eum.* 60–6). Orestes comes to question Apollo's 'wisdom' in this play and in *Iphigenia in Tauris*; in *Orestes* he and others denounce Apollo's advice repeatedly but his trust is restored in the *dénouement* (*Or.* 1666–72): see further 971–2 n. The contrast here is between the god's own oracular words and less direct modes of interpreting signs in bird-flight, entrails etc. where source and interpretation were less easy to validate and a human intermediary could be suspected of error or dishonesty. That seers depend on divine cooperation is noticed already in Solon fr. 13.52–6 *IEG*. Evidence of distrust is common in Athenian writers of the late 5th century, e.g. *Hipp.* 1055–9, *Hel.* 744–57, *Pho.* 772, 954–9, *Ba.* 255–7, F 795, S. *OT* 497–503, Thuc. 8.1. In some tragic contexts the distrust is proved terribly mistaken. »» Burkert 1985.109–18. **I happily dismiss:** lit. 'I bid fare well', a colloquial irony (cf. Stevens 1977.26 with Collard 2005.362).

401–31. *Electra and the Peasant.* Anxious about receiving superior guests, Electra insists that the Peasant should go to the Old Man with instructions to bring supplies for their entertainment. He departs, and will not return (though he is mentioned at 1286f.); the actor will return as the Old Man. This narrative step recalls *Odyssey* 16, where Telemachus asks the swineherd Eumaeus to report his safe return to Penelope and this leaves father and son alone so that Odysseus can safely reveal himself. Euripides' audience might half expect Orestes to reveal himself to Electra now, while still feeling that the Old Man ought to have a role.

401. Now more than before: the unusual Greek word-order ('Now than before more') is emphatic; cf. S. *El.* 597f., Aesch. F 466.2f.

402. we feel our hearts warming: lit. 'we are being heart-warmed'; the verb has the object it would have had if active; cf. 578, 602, KG 1.316.

409. my dear father's former tutor: cf. 16, 285–7. [L's 'my former nurse of a dear father' was corrected by Victorius (**my dear father's**) and Elmsley (**tutor**). Others have suggested 'my father's former dear tutor' (Camper) or 'go, please (μοι), to (my) dear father's former tutor' (Diggle 1977.110); but Electra is again stressing her devotion to her father).]

410–1. by the Tanaus river etc.: the district is the plain called Cynuria or Thyreatis. It was disputed between Argos and Sparta at least since the mid-6th century when Sparta seized it after the 'Battle of the Champions' (Hdt. 1.82), and was reclaimed by Argos unsuccessfully in the treaty negotiations of 420 (Thuc. 5.14.3, 5.41.2). It is thus a suitable place for the Old Man's 'exile' from Argos. If the Peasant lives near the river Inachus (as line 1 may suggest), his journey will be about 35 km. each way, but the distance and the implied time-lapse (covered by the ensuing choral ode) are dramatically irrelevant.

413. †*this very man etc.*†: L's wrong metre and sense have not been corrected decisively. [Heimsoeth and Weil give the best sense, 'Tell him, since these men have arrived here/at our house'; the latter is more likely to have been corrupted (ἐς added to clarify the terminal accusative δόμους). Kvičala gives 'Tell (him), seeing that these men have arrived', Musgrave 'Tell him, having arrived at his house' (but the participle should then be aorist rather than perfect ἀφιγμένος). »» Kovacs 1996.103f.; Slings 1997.148.]

414. [some guest-fare: L's ξένων gives 'some things for the guests' dinner'. Weil's correction is very plausible in light of 359 and the hypothesis fragment, lines 3 and 8.]

416. the child he rescued once: lit. 'rescues', a 'registering' present tense for an act with continuing effect, e.g. *Med.* 955, *Andr.* 9, 53, 152, *HF* 967; KG 1.137(d).

418–9. it would be galling news etc.: Electra again assumes the worst about her mother. Aeschylus makes Clytemnestra react ambivalently to the false news of Orestes' death, *Cho.* 696–9, 734–41. In Sophocles' play Orestes and his tutor expect her to be glad of it (S. *El.* 56f., 666f.), but again she is actually ambivalent (766ff.).

421–5. go into the house etc.: the Peasant continues to treat Electra as an ordinary wife: cf. 64, 77–9 n., 343–4. Presumably the **supplies** he has in mind are the basics (bread, olives etc.); the Old Man will add meat, cheese and wine.

426–31. When I light on situations like this etc.: the Peasant talks sententiously once more but also again shows his *sôphrosynê* (right-mindedness, moderation). The man who has sufficient food and clothing is as rich as a rich man: Solon fr. 24 *IEG* = Theognis 719–28; cf. Horace, *Epodes* 1.12.5–7, *Satires* 1.1. 45f. But money is still useful for entertaining and in illness, and makes a man 'more able to bear a great disaster when it befalls him' (Solon to Croesus, Hdt.

1.32.6). [On the text in 426 see Diggle 1981.35f. (also illustrating **γνόμῃ** 'thinking'), Slings 1997.148. I slightly prefer **γνόμῃ in my thinking** (Slings) to γνώμη, 'When my thinking lights...' (Diggle).]

432–486. First Stasimon. The Arms of Achilles

The Chorus is alone for the first time and can sing a formal ode, providing a pause after the continuous dramatic movement of the early scenes and setting the situation in historical and emotional perspective. Within a narrative frame a series of pictures leads to a wishful prediction of Clytemnestra's punishment. *Strophe 1:* the Greek fleet sailing to Troy, carrying Achilles. *Antistrophe 1:* the Nereids (earlier) bringing Achilles his divinely-made arms at Cheiron's cave. *Strophe 2:* the arms (an *ekphrasis:* 452–77 n.), including the shield with its outer circle showing Perseus in flight carrying Medusa's head and *(Antistrophe 2)* its centre showing the sun and constellations; also the helmet with Sphinxes carrying prey, the corslet with Pegasus attacking the Chimaera, and *(Epode)* the spear with a galloping chariot-team. 'Such were the men Agamemnon led; the gods will punish you, Clytemnestra, for his murder.'

The ode is rich in pictorial detail and impressions of movement (the tradition that Euripides originally trained as a painter may be an inference from passages of this kind). The oared ships dancing amongst Nereids and dolphins, Achilles' nimbleness, the Nereids' journey, Perseus in flight, the Sun's chariot, the dancing constellations, Sphinxes making off with their prey, the Chimaera fleeing from Pegasus, chariot-horses in the dust of battle: all are conveyed by a few words each in an ordered profusion. The poet could rely on poetic and iconographic traditions to supplement and give depth to his sketches. Epic vocabulary is enlivened by new or recent compounds or phrasings (**φίλαυλος** 'aulos-loving', **ταχύπορον** 'swift-going', **λαιμοτόμαν** 'throat-severed', **χρυσότυπᾳ** 'gold-beaten', **περι-πλεύρῳ** 'rib-encasing', **τετραβάμονες** 'four-stepping', **δοριπόνων** 'spear-toiling', **κοῦφον ἅλμα ποδῶν** 'light in foot-spring', **χρυσέους ἀκμόνων μόχθους** 'golden anvil-labours', **ἀσπιστᾶν τευχέων** 'shield-bearer equipment', **φαέθων κύκλος ἁλίοιο** 'radiant circle of the sun'). Ornamental epithets are an essential pictorial feature; a quarter of the ode's words are adjectives. The typically epic deployment of epithet–noun combinations (**dark-nosed prows** etc.) and periphrases (**the Peirenaean colt** etc.) is varied by separation *(hyperbaton)* and interlacing of nouns and adjectives in elaborate structures (esp. 435–7, 443f., 459f., 473–5).

The ode continues in the aeolic mode of the monody and parodos (112–66 n.). Glyconics etc. dominate the first strophic pair, while dactylic runs (– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ etc.) are interspersed in the second to heighten the epic tone as the arms are described (analysis of 456ff. ~ 468ff. is uncertain: see notes below). In the epode lyric iambics (x – ⏑ – and variants) interrupt (478–81) as the Chorus turns to accusing Clytemnestra. »» Dale 1981.96f., Donzelli 1995a.77f.

This and the second stasimon are amongst a dozen Euripidean odes sometimes called 'dithyrambic' because, like dithyrambs such as Bacchyl. 17 (whose opening is very similar), they comprise a single narrative remote from the dramatic action and told in a decorated and picturesque style. Csapo 2009 links them with the development of Euripides' 'New Musical' style. Usually the narrative belongs in the mythical background and establishes a setting (e.g. the capture of Troy, *Hec.* 905–51) or a contrast (e.g. the wedding of Peleus and Thetis *vs.* the sacrifice of Iphigenia, *IA* 1036–97). These functions may be fulfilled on a smaller scale in other odes, e.g. the recollection of Phaedra's voyage to Athens, *Hipp.* 752–62.

The contrast between the high-spirited optimism of the fleet's departure and the fate of Agamemnon on his return is thematically significant (cf. 8–10 n.). Achilles exemplifies the heroic nature of the expedition and its leader. He is seen obliquely through the setting of the arms presentation at Cheiron's cave, and then through the decorations on his armour. Thematic motifs, mythical connotations and imagery link these descriptions closely with the drama. The high achievements of Achilles and the heroic expedition are contrasted with the crime against Agamemnon by the song's epic style, its remote scenes (receding both chronologically and geographically), the monumentality of the descriptions, their pure, non-human settings (sea, mountains, heaven), and the harmony amongst their inhabitants and the privileged humans associated with them. If Clytemnestra's crime is a foul and godless violation of this order, her punishment sponsored by the gods in heaven (482) might be expected to restore it. Through this lense Orestes would appear as heroic, victorious, his father's son, sharing the aura of Achilles, Perseus and Bellerophon, an aspect mooted elsewhere in the play (esp. 336–8, 614, 761f., 854–85: Introduction, pp. 18–19).

On the other hand, this emphasis on myth, art and distance suggests a gulf between the idealized world of the ode's beginning and the realities at its end. We have seen, and will see, Orestes and Electra isolated from the world of gods, heroes, nature and easy triumph. This is stressed by the impersonal, destructive bleakness of the last few scenes on the armour which lead into the topic of vengeance. And if positive tones predominate in the first strophic pair, the second offers disturbing undertones. Perseus, brought up in exile, returned to Argos but killed his grandfather and could not inherit the kingdom. Bellerophon's heroic career ended in an offence against nature, the loss of Pegasus, exile, and misery (dramatized in Euripides' earlier *Bellerophon*). Achilles died at Troy (in a futile war, the Dioscuri will reveal: 1280–3). The splendour of his armour is compromised by its terrifying function, stressed in its impact on the Trojans (452, 456f.) and especially on Hector, the most sympathetic figure in the *Iliad* (468–9 n.). Some features of the armour ominously transform images from earlier in the ode (leaping dolphins ~ galloping horses, armour's splendour ~ murderous spear, countryside with centaur ~ horses on battlefield). Above all, the imagery of these heroic scenes will be reflected or adjusted in the play's murder scenes: the pleasant setting *(locus amoenus)* in which Aegisthus is sacrificing to the Nymphs (see

774–80 n.); Orestes as Gorgon-slayer (1221–3, cf. 855–7 n.), Clytemnestra's throat gashed like the Gorgon's (485–6, 1222–3), Clytemnestra as lioness (1163) and prey (965).

Thus the ode expresses the Chorus's optimism on its surface (cf. 401–3) but also strikes chords that will reverberate in a different key as the play moves towards its climax. The technique is similar to that of the second stasimon of *Heracles,* where the Chorus contrasts its own mortality with Heracles' expected divinity, not knowing that Heracles is to be proved as mortal as themselves.

»» O'Brien 1964, Walsh 1977, Mulryne 1977, King 1980, Morwood 1981, de Romilly 1991, Michelakis 2002.154–62, Gartziou-Tatti 2004, Morin 2004, Csapo 2009. Text: Donzelli 1992, Willink 2009.

432–41. *The voyage to Troy.* **Famous ships etc.:** the invocation (cf. 1 n.) shifts attention from the dramatic moment to a distant event and so to its wider narrative context (for such patterns in Euripides' choral odes see Mastronarde 2010.130–45, esp. 138–40). The opening evokes the spirited mood of the Greek expedition before the landing at Troy and the disasters that ensued. Hecuba describes the same scene from the Trojan point of view in *Tro.* 122 ('Ship-prows that with swift oars sailed to sacred Troy...with the hateful paean of *auloi*...); see also *Hel.* 1451ff. (the Sidonian ship that will carry Helen happily home from Egypt), *Hipp.* 752 (the ship that brought Phaedra from Crete to her doomed marriage in Athens). Here the ships are propelled by their **countless oars** (cf. 1–3 n.), each one's rowers getting their rhythm from an aulete (435–7 n.). The aulos music and oar-beats together give the rhythm for the Nereids' and dolphins' dancing, and the ships themselves 'dance' with their rhythmic oar-movements. The Nereids are the fifty daughters of Nereus (the Old Man of the Sea) and the Oceanid Doris, named by Hesiod in *Theog.* 240–64 (but names and numbers were fluid, e.g. *Iliad* 18.39ff.); the most famous were Poseidon's wife Amphitrite and Achilles' mother Thetis. They typically danced, rode the waves with dolphins and other sea-creatures, and accompanied ships, e.g. S. *OC* 716–9, Ap. Rhod. 4.930–63, Catull. 64.12–17. The dancing of Nereids and/or dolphins is a mythical model for circular Greek choral dances, especially Dionysiac dithyrambs, as in the hymn commemorating Arion's rescue (see 435–7 n.) and often elsewhere in poetry and art, e.g. *IT* 427–32, *IA* 1045–7, *Ion* 1081–7 (Nereids), *Hel.* 1451–6 (the ship as 'leader of the beautifully-dancing dolphins'). »» Barringer 1995, Csapo 2003.

434. conducting dances etc.: ships and Nereids together initiate the dance and participate in it (»» LSJ 'πέμπω' III.2, Chadwick 1996.239f.). [The conjecture χορεύματα (Diggle 1977.111f., West 1980.14) gives 'conducting the Nereids' dances in which the dolphin...', a less coherent picture. »» Donzelli 1992.111–4, Csapo 2003.71–4, Willink 2009.206f.]

435–7. the aulos-loving dolphin etc.: dolphins were legendary for being attracted to ships and music, most famously in the story of the poet-musician Arion who was rescued by a dolphin after being thrown overboard by thieving sailors (Hdt.

1.24, Plut. *Mor.* 160e–162a, *PMG* fr. 939 mentioned above). Auloi accompanied both choral dancing and warship-rowing (for details of the double-piped aulos see *OCD* 'music' §3.2(a), West 1992.81–107). Dolphins communicate with whistling and moaning sounds, so the aulos is quite likely to have attracted them, as is the splashing of oars (a food-signal like fish jumping). **leaped and whirled** evokes both the 'curvacious leaping' of dolphins (Willink 2009.207) and their circular dance. **dark-nosed prows** elaborates the epic 'dark-prowed ship' (νεὸς κυανοπρῴροιο).

[Line 437 corresponds metrically with 447, so with the text as printed the first syllable of εἰλισσόμενος must be prolonged over two beats in 'New Music' style, as Borthwick 1994.31f. and Csapo 2003.72f. suggest (cf. Rutherford 2012. 270f.). Triclinius's κυανεμβόλοις εἰειλισσόμενος has the same implication and was presumably suggested by the parody of Euripidean lyric style in Ar. *Frogs* 1309–22 (εἰειειειλίσσετε 1314, ἵν' ὁ φίλαυλος...κυανεμβόλοις 1317f.). L's κυανεμβόλοισιν εἰλισσόμενος is metrically anomalous, as Willink explains (he suggests –οις ⟨συν⟩ειλισσόμενος).]

438–41. bringing the son of Thetis: πορεύων implies guiding, as in e.g. *Med.* 180, *Rhes.* 650, Pl. *Phd.* 107e2 (Donzelli 1992.114 n. 23). **Achilles light-springing etc.:** lit. 'light in spring of feet', elaborating his epic epithet πόδας ὠκύς 'swift of feet'. Some see an allusion to his leap during his battle with the river (*Iliad* 21.302) or his first leap ashore at Troy, but a general image of athleticism is apter here. For examples of his speed, e.g. in running down Troilos and Hector, see Burgess 2009.13f. He continued to run in the Black Sea sanctuaries where his ghost was thought to dwell (see Cropp on *IT* 435–7). **the shores of Simois** are the landing-place at the mouth of the river Simois, 4 km. north of Troy.

442–51. *The Nereids bring arms for Achilles.* This account is distinctive in two ways. First, Achilles leaves for Troy from Cheiron's cave rather than his father's home at Phthia as in the *Iliad*, or Scyros where in a version that became popular in the 5th century Thetis hid him disguised as a girl to protect him from death in the war (Euripides used this story in his *Scyrians*: »» Gantz 1993.580–2). Secondly, Achilles receives armour made by Hephaestus at the outset, whereas in the *Iliad* that armour replaces a set given to him by Peleus (also of divine origin, *Il.* 17.194–7) which Hector has seized from Patroclus's corpse. The *Iliad* probably adapted a tradition that the original armour came from Hephaestus and was obtained by Thetis in a vain attempt to protect her son (cf. Burgess 2009.16). Attic Black-figure vases generally show Achilles receiving the arms from Thetis and the Nereids at his father's home (cf. *IA* 1058–79, *LIMC* I 'Achilleus' nos. 186–205), while Red-Figure vases show the Iliadic variant (*LIMC* nos. 506–541: the Nereids increasingly dominate this scene, probably reflecting Aeschylus's *Nereides*; many 5th-century and later artworks show armour-carrying Nereids riding through the sea on dolphins or sea-horses). There are no sure antecedents for the presentation at Cheiron's cave; it may have been depicted on the 6th-century Chest of Cypselus (described rather

vaguely by Pausanias 5.19.8), or Euripides may have developed it himself to enhance Achilles' unspoiled 'naturalness' (as he did in *Iphigenia at Aulis* through frequent references to Cheiron), and to evoke the wedding of Peleus and Thetis on Mount Pelion (often a paradigm of blessed innocence in contrast with the troubles that followed). »» *LIMC* refs. above, Jouan 1966.218–22, Schefold 1992.214–9, Barringer 1995.17–48.

442–4. Nereids leaving Euboean capes: why Euboea? Chalcis (on the wrong side of the island) was perhaps a legendary site for Hephaestus's forge and/or the home of the Nereids. But the departure point may be just a matter of convenience, the north coast of Euboea being opposite the south end of the Magnesian peninsula and Cape Sepias (itself sacred to Thetis and the Nereids and associated with Cheiron: »» Aston 2009). Once ashore, the Nereids apparently trek nearly 100 km. through the foothills of Mounts Pelion and Ossa (but Ossa, far beyond Pelion and Cheiron's cave (next note), may be no more than a picturesque addition; in *IA* 1054–7 they venture no farther than the beach to celebrate Thetis's wedding). **bore golden workings etc.:** lit. 'bore golden toils from Hephaestus's anvils (consisting) of shield-bearer equipment'.

[Willink 2009.209 and Distilo justify Weil's rearrangement of L's 'shield-bearer toils from Hephaestus's golden anvils (consisting) of equipment'. ἀσπιστής (here adjectival: 139 n.) occurs only in the *Iliad* (12x) and Euripides (cf. *HF* 1194, *Ion* 198, *IA* 1069), but note A. *Ag.* 403 ἀσπίστορας κλόνους 'shield-bearing throngs', S. *Aj.* 565 ἄνδρες ἀσπιστῆρες 'shield-bearing men', E. *Hcld.* 277 ἀσπιστῆρες. The military terms παρασπίστης (cf. 886) and ὑπασπιστής are commoner.]

445–6. up along Pelion etc.: the peaks (1600 m. and nearly 2000 m.) are about 55 km. apart. The giants Otus and Ephialtes famously tried to pile Ossa on Olympus (2900 m., 40 km. further northwest) and Pelion on Ossa to attack the gods in heaven but were destroyed by Apollo (Gantz 1993.170). Pelion was a traditional home of centaurs, e.g. *HF* 364–74, *IA* 1046f.

[These phrases depend either on **ἔφερον bore** or on a participle corrupted in 448. The word νάπη (**wooded slopes**) or neuter νάπος could mean any wooded mountain terrain, not just 'vales' or 'glens' as in LSJ and Denniston; in *Iliad* 8.557f. ~ 16.299f. clouds clearing at night reveal σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι καὶ νάπαι, 'peaks, high foothills and wooded slopes'. L's accentuation giving 'Ossa's sheer sacred wooded slopes' is improbable, and **sheer Ossa's sacred wooded slopes** more likely than 'sacred Ossa's sheer wooded slopes' (ἐρυμνὰς Ὄσσας ἱερᾶς νάπας); Ossa was noted for its forbidding height (Medda 1997.95), and the slopes are sacred because nymphs inhabit them. L's πρυμνὰς would presumably mean 'lowest (slopes)' (cf. Homer's πρυμνώρεια, the 'foot' of Mount Ida, *Il.* 14.307), but by Euripides' time the word πρυμνός appears exclusively as the noun πρυμνή denoting a ship's stern (originally πρυμνὴ ναῦς).]

447. lookouts of the nymphs: cf. *Hel.* 1324 'lookouts of Idaean nymphs' (the peaks of Mt. Ida), *Pho.* 233 'goddess's mountain-lookouts' (the peaks of Parnassus).

448. †*seeking the maidens?*†: an unsolved puzzle. [The maidens might possibly be Cheiron's daughters who according to Pindar helped educate Jason (*Pyth.* 4.103). **μάτευσ'** cannot be corrected to ματεῦσ(αι) 'seeking' (participle from ματέω) since -αι cannot be elided; only μάτευσ(ε) 'sought' (unaugmented aorist from ματεύω) or ματεῦσ(α) 'seeking' (singular) or ματεῦσ(ι) 'they seek' (again from ματέω) are possible; but these are all Ionic forms and very unlikely in tragedy. Some suggested emendations include κόρον 'the youth', i.e. Achilles. For discussions see Denniston, Distilo, and (with a more radical solution) Willink 2009.211f.]

448–9. the old horse-man: i.e. Cheiron, though Achilles' father Peleus is ἱππηλ-άτα 'horse-driver' in *Iliad* 7.125 etc. (Csapo 2009.109 sees an intentional ambiguity). The cultivated centaur Cheiron was the physical and moral teacher of Achilles and some other heroes, cf. *Iliad* 11.832, Pind. *Pyth.* 4.101ff., 6.21–6, *Nem.* 3.42–63. His role as Achilles' *tropheus* (cf. 16 n.) is emphasized in *IA* 208f., 708–10, 926f.

449. a bright light: φῶς connotes both heroic distinction and protective power, cf. *IA* 1063 (Achilles 'a great light for Thessaly'), *Hec.* 841 (Agamemnon), *HF* 797 (Heracles), Pind. *Pyth.* 4.270 (Arcesilas of Cyrene). 'In cultic poetry, light imagery is used of the divine epiphany of a saviour god' (Csapo 2008.278 with refs.). Achilles also has a destructive brightness as the imagery in 464–9 will reveal.

451. a swift-moving runner: lit. 'a swift-going foot'; such pleonasms are typical of Euripides' lyric style (Breitenbach 1934.189). The phrase could be another variation on πόδας ὠκύς (cf. 439, *Andr.* 1236), but πόδα is better taken as a synecdoche (part for whole): see Denniston with other examples.

452–77. *Achilles' armour.* An *ekphrasis* or poetic description of artefacts. The most famous example describes Achilles' arms in *Iliad* 18.478–612, where the shield predominates as it does here. Agamemnon's armour gets a more routine description in *Iliad* 11.15–44, and the lost epic *Aethiopis* probably included a description of the armour made by Hephaestus for the Ethiopian Memnon (son of the dawn goddess Eos) who was killed by Achilles at Troy. The Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* carries decoration to an extreme with a riot of spirits, gods, beasts, monsters and scenes from myth and life. In tragedy the shield emblems of the Seven in A. *Sept.* 369–685 are symbolically significant, as they are here; cf. *Ion* 190–217 (the sculptures at Delphi), 1141–62 (the hangings of Xuthus's feast-tent), *Pho.* 1104–40 (again the shields of the Seven). Csapo 102f. notes similarities between the decoration of Achilles' armour in this ode and that of Pheidias's Athena Parthenos which was about twenty years old when *Electra* was produced.

The shield's decoration (a central area with sun and constellations, and an outer ring with the Perseus scene) is classically severe in contrast with the

Homeric and Hesiodic shields or the highly-wrought votive shields of bronze or silver based on Near Eastern models which were displayed in Greek temples from the late Geometric period onwards (»» Fittschen 1973). In the vase-paintings of Achilles receiving the armour (442–51 n.) the shield is decorated like a normal soldier's shield. Here too its emblems are individually ordinary (Csapo 99f. with n. 8) but extraordinarily combined. »» Hardie 1985, Morin 2004, Csapo 2009. See also above on 432–86.

456–7. emblems...terrors for the Phrygians: for the word-play **σήματα δείματα** cf. 711 φάσματα δείματα, *Hec.* 70 δείμασι φάσμασι 'fearsome apparitions', [A.] *PV* 691 πήματα λύματα δείματ(α) (text uncertain), Garvie on A. *Cho.* 901. **σήματα...τετύχθαι** recalls *Iliad* 22.30: see below on 464–9.

[The phrasing **δείματα Φρύγια** (lit. 'Phrygian terrors') and the metre of 456f. ~ 468f. have been questioned. Diggle's conjectures (1994.316, here 'terrors for the Phrygian <land>') address the problems. Donzelli 1992.116–9 accepts L's text with reservations.]

458–63. *The shield's outer field (Perseus).* The encircling sea recalls the Ocean on the Homeric and Hesiodic shields. Above it Perseus returns after beheading the Gorgon Medusa with the aid of Hermes and Athena. This central episode in the legend of Perseus was popular in archaic and classical art, which usually shows the beheading itself or the aftermath (»» Schauenburg 1960.19–55, Schefold 1988.100–7; Gantz 1993.304–7, Hirschberger 2000 for both literature and art). The aftermath often features a vain pursuit by Medusa's sister-Gorgons, who in [Hes.] *Shield* 216–37 have fearsome serpents attached to their belts and resemble the Erinyes who will pursue Orestes on Clytemnestra's behalf (1252–3 n.); this may be a further latent negativity in the image of the triumphant Perseus (see above on 432–86 at end, Garvie on A. *Cho.* 831–7). Hirschberger notes that in art from the later 5th century there is a tendency to portray Medusa as beautiful rather than monstrous, and as defenceless before Perseus's attack (as Clytemnestra will be). Euripides staged the flying Perseus in *Andromeda* (412 B.C.): 'Through mid-heaven I cut my path, setting winged foot over flowing sea and Pleiad... bearing the Gorgon's head' (F 124).

Hermes' birth and infancy on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia are related in *Homeric Hymn* 4 (»» Gantz 1993.105f.). Livestock and beasts of the hunt were in his realm, cf. 699–706, *Hom. Hymn* 4.567–71. He is **son of Maia** as Orestes' helper in A. *Cho.* 812–4 and S. *El.* 1395–7.

[holding, throat severed, the Gorgon's head: κορυφάν is Herwerden's correction of L's φυάν 'form', assuming a rarefied use of κορυφή (normally 'peak', 'crown'). Seidler's **λαιμοτόμαν** 'throat-cut' gives more effective sense than L's λαιμοτόμον ('throat-cutting Perseus'): cf. *Pho.* 455, *Ion* 1054, also *Hec.* 208, *IA* 776. The feminine form **λαιμοτόμαν** is unusual in a compound adjective but seems needed for the metre (apparently – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – | ⏑⏑ ⏑ – in the corresponding line 471). On the metrical question see Diggle 1974.26f., 1984.68. Weil's ἅλμας (also **brine**) makes 459 and 471 dactylic tetrameters and is preferred by Kovacs and Willink 2009.212.]

464–9. *The shield's central field (sun and stars).* The Homeric shield shows sun, moon and 'all the constellations', naming Pleiades, Hyades, the nearby Orion, and the Bear 'who watches over Orion' (*Il.* 18.484–9). Tydeus's shield in A. *Sept.* 385–90 has the moon and stars set in a heaven 'blazing' with their brightness. A tapestry in Xuthus's feast-tent (*Ion* 1146–58) shows 'the stars in *aithêr*'s circle' — Helios (Sun) with his chariot driving westward, Hesperus (evening), Night with her chariot, stars (Pleiades, Orion, Bear, Hyades), Moon and Dawn. Vase-paintings often show stars etc. as shield-devices (Yalouris 1980.313–8).

to turn back Hector's eyes: the terrifying radiance of the sun and constellations again recalls the Homeric armour, whose brightness terrifies the Myrmidons so that only Achilles can look on it (*Il.* 19.14–17). Achilles in his armour shines like the sun (*Il.* 19.397f.), and Priam sees him pursuing Hector, gleaming like the Dog-star that 'is fashioned as an evil sign' for mortals (*Il.* 22.25–32: Homer's κακὸν...σῆμα τέτυκται was echoed in 456f. **τοιάδε σήματα...τετύχθαι, these emblems were fashioned**). His armour 'gleaming like the glare of blazing fire or rising sun' terrifies and routs Hector (*Il.* 22.131–7), and his spear shines like the Evening Star (*Il.* 22.317–20). Sophocles' Orestes likewise expects to 'shine like a star on my enemies', S. *El.* 66.

466. on his winged horses: i.e. his chariot drawn by winged horses, a Homeric usage (LSJ 'ἵππος' I.1). The sun's chariot was well known in Indo-European and Near Eastern culture and appears in Greek poetry from the 7th century onwards. The chariot-borne Sun, Dawn, Moon and Night appear frequently in Euripides and in 5th-century vase-painting. »» West 1997.507f., Stieber 2011. 252–4, Diggle on *Phaethon* 2, 173, *LIMC* V 'Helios' nos. 1–37, 105–23 (Sun on chariot and with other light gods), II 'Astra' nos. 3–13 (Night in chariot), 39, 58–65 (Moon in chariot), III 'Eos' nos. 1–3 (Eos in chariot).

467. ethereal choruses of stars: the stars' dancing is linked with the orderly motion of the cosmos and the music of the spheres; they dance around the earth or the axis of the cosmos like a ritual chorus. These ideas were important in Pythagorean thought and Orphic/Dionysiac mystery cults, and are documented in tragedy (e.g. *Ion* 1078–86, S. *Ant.* 1146–53, Critias *TrGF* 43 F 4) and later cult-hymns and philosophical sources (e.g. Pl. *Timaeus* 40c). »» Csapo 2008 (sources p. 264, this passage pp. 277–80).

468. Pleiades, Hyades: the two groups lie close together in the constellation Taurus; their rising and setting were traditionally used as markers of the seasons, e.g. Hes. *Works* 383f., 614–20. The names suggest groups of human girls, and various myths accounted for their dying and becoming stars. The Pleiades are seen as a chorus in many cultures, in Greek poetry perhaps as early as Alcman's *Partheneion* (fr. 1.60–3 *PMG*), possibly also in E. *Phaethon* 66 (Diggle's conjecture). The two groups could be imagined as two half-choruses dancing together. »» Gantz 1993.212–9, West on Hes. *Works* 383–4, Csapo 2008.266f., 275f., 280, and 2009.100f.

468–9. to turn back Hector's eyes: cf. *Iliad* 22.131–7 cited above. **τροπαῖοι** suggests both 'turning' and 'routing' (671 n.). [Text and metre are uncertain: see above on 456–7. Diggle suggests ὄμμασιν Ἑκτορέοις 'Hectorean eyes' using the epic adjective Ἑκτόρεος.]

470–2. *The helmet.* **Sphinxes** are well known as both shield-emblems and tomb-markers. They were pictured as alluring musical bird-women, like Sirens but with animal bodies and tails, typically preying on young men and warriors. »» Hutchinson on A. *Sept.* 539–44, Vermeule 1979.171–3, *LIMC* VIII 'Sphinx', esp. nos. 165–81 (Sphinxes with prey). **their sung prey:** ἀοίδιμος usually means 'celebrated in song' but may also suggest 'skilled in singing' (cf. Pindar fr. 52f.6), here the singing that lures the Sphinxes' prey. The riddle of the Theban Sphinx was in song form (S. *OT* 36, 130, E. *Pho.* 50, 808, 1507, *Oedipus* F 540–540b).

473–5. *The corslet.* The **hollow corslet** is lit. 'the rib-encasing hollow', breast-plate and backplate together. The **lioness** is the Chimaera, slain by Bellerophon on his winged horse Pegasus (»» Gantz 1993.313f.: χίμαιρα means 'goat' but the monster was normally imagined as a three-headed combination of lion, goat and serpent). The scene envisaged here is a standard one: Pegasus in flight, Bellerophon mounted and about to use his lance, the Chimaera below the horse and fleeing while looking back and up at her attackers (»» *LIMC* III 'Chimaira', VII 'Pegasos' nos. 152–96, Yalouris 1977, Schefold 1988.115–27). *Ion* 201–4 is another allusive description of the scene on a temple-sculpture at Delphi. The description here recalls Cassandra's vision of Clytemnestra as a lioness in A. *Ag.* 1258, an image that the Chorus will recall as Orestes prepares to kill her (1163). Further parallels between Orestes and Bellerophon, Clytemnestra and the 'lioness', are suggested by Morin 2004.113–6. The **Peirenean colt**, Pegasus, was said to have created the spring Peirene at Corinth with a blow of his hoof and to have been tamed there by Bellerophon with Athena's aid (Pind. *Ol.* 13.63–92). Pegasus sprang from the Gorgon when Perseus killed her (Hes. *Theog.* 280f.).

476–8. *The spear.* An engraved spear or spearhead is unrealistic, but these are divinely made arms and Euripides may have been thinking of monumental art rather than ordinary military equipment (cf. Csapo 2009.102 n. 17 rejecting the widely accepted conjecture ἄορι δ' ἐν 'and on the sword'. Metre requires the rare form **δορεῖ** rather than L's δορὶ.) **four-stepping horses** evokes both a four-horse chariot team (cf. 466 n.) and four-legged horses (Csapo 2009.107f.). Greek vases often show galloping chariot-teams, e.g. Taplin 2007 nos. 41, 82, 109. The verb **ἔπαλλον** points a contrast between this grim scene and the dolphins' joyous leaping (**ἔπαλλε**, 435). **dust...billowing** is another epic picture, cf. *Iliad* 11.151–2 (dust stirred by thundering horses), 13.820, 23.372, 449, [Hes.] *Shield* 62f. A dust-cloud can easily look **dark**, but the wording may evoke the blood-blackened dust rising around Hector's body as Achilles drags it behind his chariot (*Iliad* 22.401–3: Csapo 2009.103f.). In *Iliad* 20.494–503

the earth runs black with the blood spattering Achilles' chariot as his horses trample over his enemies' corpses.

479–81. Such were those spear-toiling men etc.: δορίπονος is found only here and in A. *Sept.* 169, 628 (evoking the suffering of defeat) and *IA* 771 (again the Achaeans at Troy). The **lord** is clearly Agamemnon, Homer's 'lord of men' (ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν) rather than Achilles, and the **union** is Clytemnestra's adultery (cf. 164–6, 211–2) rather than Helen's. But the phrasing echoes a conventional condemnation of Helen and once again links the two sisters' crimes (cf. 213–4 n., Csapo 2009.104–6). Jouanna 1998 argues unpersuasively that Achilles and Helen are meant.

483–4. For that shall the gods...send death etc.: lit. 'send upon you a penalty (consisting) of death'. The verb πέμπω here is equivalent to ἐπιπέμπω, 'send by way of punishment' (*Pho.* 811, Pl. *Crito* 46c5 etc.: LSJ 'ἐπιπέμπω' I.2). Cf. also F 916.6–7 κρυερὰ Διόθεν | θανάτου πεμφθεῖσα τελευτή 'the cold closure of death sent by Zeus', A. *Ag.* 59f. ὑστερόποινον | πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν '(Apollo or Pan or Zeus) sends a later-punishing Erinys upon the transgressors'.

[σοί...πέμψουσιν θανάτου δίκαν is Diggle's plausible correction (1994.155–8) of L's meaningless text. He took **θανάτου δίκαν** to mean 'punishment for his death', but a genitive stating the grounds for punishment would name the crime, not what the victim suffered. Donzelli 1992.120f. doubts that θανάτου δίκη ('a capital charge' in e.g. Thuc. 3.57.3, 8.68.2, Pl. *Apol.* 39b) could be 'a penalty of death' in Euripides; but θάνατος is clearly a δίκη 'penalty' in Lysias 12.37 as well as later in Pl. *Laws* 838c7, 854e7, 955c5, Dem. 21.92.]

485–6. Yet, yet shall I see etc.: the phrasing suggests a quasi-sacrificial act (cf. 514), as does Electra's in 281 and Orestes' description of his actual blow, 1221–3. »» Mirto 1980.303f.; Introduction, pp. 19–20.

487–698. Second Episode. Recognition and Planning

Two dramatic movements are hinged symmetrically around a brief choral song: 487–584 Recognition, 585–95 Choral celebration, 596–698 Planning and departure.

487–584. *Recognition.* The Old Man can be expected to recognize Orestes (cf. 283–7), but the moment continues to be approached circuitously even though there is no serious obstacle to it. He will meet Orestes, sense his identity, verify it through the scar, and convince Electra in a climactic stichomythia. But first we are detained by his dialogue and argument with Electra. The design of this scene can be considered in the light of narrative and poetic traditions. In the *Odyssey* Odysseus is identified through an old scar by his nurse Eurycleia (*Od.* 19) and later pushes his disguise to its limits before breaking down and declaring himself to his father Laertes (*Od.* 24). Whether Orestes will identify himself (as he does in

Choephori and in Sophocles' *Electra*) is a question Euripides seems to have kept open as long as possible. Electra's condition may be compared with Laertes', and her extreme scepticism *(apistia)* and cleverness *(sophia)* with that of Penelope, who in *Od.* 23 suggests it may be an impostor who has just massacred 108 local princes in her dining-room. The Old Man has elements of both Eurycleia and Eumaeus (also a sceptic in *Od.* 14.149–50 etc., as is Telemachus in *Od.* 16.192–5). In insisting on paradox, emotional impact and dramatic irony, even with some implausibilities, Euripides is constructing a conventional recognition. A straight declaration by Orestes would be too simple, and even the Old Man's task acquires a *peripeteia* ('turnabout') through Electra's extreme unwillingness to believe.

At the same time Euripides echoes the Aeschylean scene, thus advertising the difference of his own scene, most obviously in the dispute over the evidence for Orestes' return (518–44 n.). The signs that Electra responds to and accepts so eagerly in the earlier play (*Cho.* 164–211) are dismissed on the grounds that they could not prove anything and/or could not exist (Sophocles' Electra rejects her sister's interpretation of the lock and other tomb-offerings in S. *El.* 871–933, but only because she has just been told by the disguised Orestes that Orestes is dead). This dispute seems to go beyond the aims mentioned above, and critics have debated the further purpose. Mere humour seems a weak explanation, and mockery of Aeschylus an unlikely one since the distortions are such that the mockery hardly damages its target. Rather, whereas Aeschylus portrays the eager reunion of two willing partners at Agamemnon's tomb, and the Sophoclean Electra's disbelief motivates her desperate decision to act alone against Aegisthus and heightens the tension leading to Orestes' self-revelation, Euripides has contrived a scene in which both parties are reluctant and Electra is made to appear wilful, unintuitive, and unable to respond to the kinship-based signs of Orestes' presence that easily convinced her Aeschylean predecessor. In rejecting these signs she uses — or rather misuses — sophistic techniques of argument (equivocation, twisting her opponent's meaning, tendentious arguments from probability) to arrive at the opposite of the truth. The scene thus foreshadows the later scene in which she overrides Orestes' all too valid doubts about the rightness of killing their mother (967ff.: see especially Gallagher 2003 and details in 518–44 n. below).

The diversion ends as the Old Man at last thinks of asking Electra's visitors about Orestes. Their reappearance leads to his identifying Orestes in a short stichomythia (563–78), like *Choephori* 211–24 (verbal reminiscences: 563 + 565 ~ *Cho.* 212–3, 567 ~ *Cho.* 219) but with different effect as Orestes resists identification up the last moment. The scar similarly recalls and is contrasted with the scar in Odysseus's thigh by which Eurycleia recognizes him and he later proves his identity to his faithful herdsmen (*Od.* 19.388ff., 21.217ff.): whereas Odysseus was wounded in the thigh as a young man performing heroically in a boar-hunt with his grandfather and uncles (narrated at length in *Od.* 19), Orestes tripped and cut his head as a child while chasing a fawn with Electra in the courtyard of their father's house. The contrast is reinforced by the Old Man's comments on super-

ficial nobility (*eugeneia*) and counterfeit coinage (550–1 n., 558–9), which hint at Orestes' less than heroic stature.

»» Solmsen 1967.14–18, Donzelli 1978.102–35, Halporn 1983, Goldhill 1986b.247–50, 258f., Aélion 1983.1.113–8. Sophoclean comparisons: Vögler 1967.157–75. Recognition conventions and Odyssean influence: Dingel 1969, Richardson 1983, Emlyn-Jones 1984. The scar: Tarkow 1981, Goff 1991. See also 518–44 n. on the recognition debate, and Introduction, pp. 12–13.

487–92. Where, where is my young lady etc.: the lines cover the Old Man's slow approach to the cottage, stressing his age and feebleness in a conventional way, e.g. *HF* 107–26 (Chorus), *Ion* 735–40 (Old Man), *Or.* 470–5 (Tyndareus), *Cresphontes* F 448a.73a–76 (Chorus). His infirmity helps to make Electra's rejection of his suggestions plausible. His loyalty is shared with his models in the *Odyssey* and *Choephori* (Orestes' nurse: 504–8 n.). Such characters are often treated with humour leading to a surprising reversal when they assert themselves effectively (especially Peleus in *Andromache* and Iolaus in *Children of Heracles*). The Old Man will correctly interpret the evidence from the tomb and identify Orestes in spite of Electra's objections, and will go on to direct the plan against Aegisthus.

489–90. How steep the approach etc.: lit. 'how steep an approach...does she have'. [The slight awkwardness of this provoked Musgrave's 'How steep this approach...' and Scaliger's 'How steep is (ὀρθίως ἔχει) the approach...'. In 490 Elmsley's πόδα could be right as in e.g. 94, 1173 (Diggle 1981.36f.).]

496. garlands: for hosts and guests, marking the sanctity of the meal.

497–9. and this hoary treasure etc.: old wine was sometimes personified as an old man, e.g. Men. *Dysc.* 946, where it is also **πολιόν**. The **weaker drink** is often understood as weaker wine (*vin ordinaire*, Parmentier) but probably means water, the usual mixer for ancient Greek wine.

500. Let someone take etc.: presumably a house-servant (140 n.).

501. this threadbare garment of mine: Electra's phrase, 185.

504–8. But why, old friend etc.: the discussion recalls the Nurse in *Choephori* 744–53: 'My heart was pained in my breast by the ancient afflictions...in the house of Atreus, but not till now have I suffered (ἀνεσχόμην) such a woe; the other ills I patiently (τλημόνως) bore, but [to lose] Orestes, my life's labour, whom I received from his mother and nurtured (ἐξέθρεψα)...bearing many toilsome duties without profit to myself (ἀνωφέλητ' ἐμοί)!'

504. Perhaps after so long etc.: μῶν (= μὴ οὖν) here suggests tactful diffidence, not serious doubt (cf. Barrett on *Hipp.* 794). L's text does not quite make sense; probably Electra asks whether it is her own sorry condition or recollection of the fates of Orestes and Agamemnon that have upset the old man. There is however no easy way of correcting ἀνέμνησαν. [Dobree's σ' ἀνέμνησεν makes **τἀμὰ...κακά** the subject but leaves the sentence incomplete ('Perhaps my troubles have reminded you?'). Diggle adds a change to κακῶν, giving a rather convoluted question: 'Perhaps my circumstances have reminded you of

your/our troubles?' Kovacs assumes a line lost after 504, e.g. 'Have <the sight of this lonely dwelling and my ragged clothing> reminded you...'. I previously suggested changing **ἢ** 'or' to ἦ (= ἆρα) in 505 and perhaps deleting 504, but the phrasing **μὲν τάμὰ...ἢ τὰς Ὀρέστου...** seems sound. »» Diggle 1977.115f. with 1981.37, Kovacs 1989.70f.]

507. unprofitably for yourself: Agamemnon would have owed his tutor care in old age, like a son to parents (Dover 1974.273f., West on *Or.* 109, Strauss 1993.65). In tragedy parents often lament the loss of this care and the frustration of their hopes through the early deaths of their children, e.g. *Med.* 1029–37, *Supp.* 918–24, 1134–7, *HF* 458, *Tro.* 758–60, S. *El.* 1143–8 (Electra as quasi-mother of Orestes).

508. yet this I did not endure: i.e. the humiliation of Agamemnon and his family which Electra has just referred to (rather than the neglect of the tomb which the Old Man goes on to describe, as Denniston suggested: see Kamerbeek 1987.289). [For **δ' οὖν** redirecting attention to the essential point that follows see *GP* 461–2, and for **ἠνεσχόμην endure** cf. 1044. Kovacs (1989.71f.) supposes (unnecessarily, I think) that a line specifying the neglect of the tomb has been lost.]

509–19. I went to his tomb etc.: the Old Man's account has much in common with Chrysothemis's in S. *El.* 893–915. Both evoke Aeschylus's scene where Electra herself makes the discoveries: arrival at the tomb, its desertion, discovery of libations and garlands, then of the lock, speculation about the lock, and inference that it must have come from Orestes. For details of the tomb-altar and offerings see on 91, 92, 323–5.

517. no Argive, surely: local people would not risk Aegisthus's wrath. A. *Cho.* 173, 187–91 and S. *El.* 909–15 make a different point: only a close relative would make a hair-offering.

518–44. *The recognition debate.* The recognition scene in *Choephori* used three signs of Orestes' identity: lock, footprints, and woven cloth. The lock may have been more traditional than the others; it is the only one attested in our slim evidence for Stesichorus's *Oresteia* (fr. 217 *PMGF*), the only one used by Sophocles, and the hallmark of Electra's story for Aristophanes' audience (*Clouds* 534–6). It is also integrally related to the context of tomb offerings. Euripides' scene clearly recalls the Aeschylean scene and treats the Aeschylean signs as follows (for analysis of the sophistic elements in her arguments, and of the weakness of the Old Man's attempts to persuade her, see Gallagher 2003. 405–8, 411f.):

The lock (515–31). The Old Man suggests Orestes may have dedicated the lock since no Argive would have done so, and asks Electra to test this idea by examining its colour. Nothing suggests he has brought it with him, so it seems that Electra dismisses it without seeing it, ignoring the Old Man's first point and relying on arguments from probability (Orestes would not fear to come openly, his hair is unlikely to match her own, a resemblance would prove nothing in any case). All of this differs from *Cho.* 166ff. where she finds the

lock, suspects that no one but Orestes could have dedicated it, and recognizes the colour, but is inclined to agree with the Chorus that he would not have dared to come himself (179f.: the matching with her own hair comes after he has revealed himself, 225–30; Sophocles omits the question of similarity). Comparisons with *Choephori* are pointed by verbal similarities: 520 **σκέψαι...προστιθεῖσα** ~ *Cho.* 230 σκέψαι...προσθεῖσα, 521 **κουρίμης** ~ *Cho.* 180 κουρίμην, 530 **ὁμοπτέρους** ~ *Cho.* 174 ὁμόπτερος.

The footprints (532–7). In *Cho.* 205–10, 228 Electra identifies the prints of Orestes' bare feet, probably by setting her own beside his and comparing their shapes (Garvie on *Cho.* 209); this may well have seemed plausible to a Greek audience (Garvie p. 87 refers to Greek and comparative evidence for the distinctiveness of feet if not footprints). In Euripides' scene the Old Man rather ineptly suggests looking for *shoe*-prints (532), but Electra does not object to this or to the general idea of using footprints as a means of identification; instead she denies the probability of finding any prints on rocky ground, and of Orestes' feet being the same *size* as her own. Again there are verbal allusions: 532 **εἰς ἴχνος βᾶσ(α)...σκέψαι** ~ *Cho.* 228 ἰχνοσκοποῦσα, 533 **σύμμετρος** ~ *Cho.* 209 μετρούμεναι (and 230 σύμμετρος referring to the hair). Aeschylus's scene does not mention rocky ground, but **κραταιλέᾳ** 'rock-hard' is found elsewhere only in Aeschylus (*Ag.* 666, F 167) and could have occurred in the lost opening of *Choephori*.

The weaving (538–44). In *Cho.* 231f. Orestes uses a piece of weaving (ὕφασμα) done by Electra herself as a final proof, something that links them directly; it is either still worn by Orestes or simply kept for identification (cf. *Ion* 1413–26). The latter seems to me more likely (but see Garvie on A. *Cho.* 164–245 at end) and may well be what the Old Man's words imply: if so, Electra's objection is captious and irrelevant. Even if the former is meant the weaving in its turn has become just an optimistic guess on the part of the Old Man, and Electra, rather than giving him a simple answer, makes much of some innocuous improbabilities — that she would have been making clothes at the age of about twelve, and that Orestes at seventeen would have kept a garment made when he was ten.

Euripides' debate thus seems to be more a travesty than a serious critique of Aeschylus's, and this has raised questions about its purpose and authenticity. Some further arguments against its authenticity can be briefly summarized and assessed:

Dramatic context. (a) The emotional tension of the recognition is compromised if an eccentric and inconclusive debate intervenes before the climax. *(b)* The Old Man behaves inconsistently by lamenting when he thinks Orestes may have returned, by speculating and suggesting tests when he could simply ask to see Orestes' representatives (as he eventually does), and by then proceeding as if he thinks Orestes has not returned (547ff.). *(c)* Electra behaves inconsistently in denying that Orestes could have returned in secret when she and others have insisted on his isolation and powerlessness throughout the play.

On the other hand, *(a)* removing 518–44 makes the recognition too simple and abrupt; Electra's rejection of the Old Man's evidence provides a needed negative movement in the build-up to the recognition, like the Aeschylean Electra's decision that Orestes can only have *sent* the lock and the Sophoclean Electra's rejection of Chrysothemis's evidence. *(b)* The Old Man's behaviour is not particularly inconsistent: he arrives overcome by emotion after visiting the tomb, grasps at the possibility that the offerings might have been made by Orestes (516–9), gives it up because of Electra's objections, settles for asking the visitors about him (547f.), and returns to it when he sees that one of them resembles Orestes (558ff.). *(c)* Electra has indeed made much of Orestes' difficulties, but she has also shown that she expects decisive action from him (274f., 336–8); this contrast between the 'heroic' Orestes and the actual Orestes is a thematic feature of the play. These objections, then, are not compelling. Moreover, deleting 518–44 makes the introduction of the tomb offerings and lock in 509–17 rather pointless.

Text and language. The text is defective at two points (538 n., 545–6 n.), but there is no obviously un-Euripidean language. It has been argued that 545–6 should follow 517 immediately and belong to the Old Man since *(a)* 518 and 545 are phrased similarly, so that 518–44 might be a substitute for 545–6, *(b)* the topic of the lock is resumed at 545 after being dropped at 531, and *(c)* 'his' in 545 seems to refer to Agamemnon, who was last mentioned in 509 and 519. On the other hand, *(a)* 545–6 are much more likely to be a false explanation offered by Electra, like A. *Cho.* 180, S. *El.* 932f.; *(b)* the lock is the focus of the whole discussion, and Electra must arrive at *some* conclusion about the offerings before the Old Man asks to see the visitors; *(c)* the reference of 'his' is a minor difficulty, perhaps due to careless writing or to the corruption in 545–6.

Many scholars have doubted whether Euripides could have wanted to create the effects that these lines create, but this is a subjective matter and no convincing explanation has been offered of why anyone else should have written them or how they could have intruded into this text (West suggests Euripides himself wrote them as a light-hearted by-product of his own play, Kovacs that they originated in a fourth-century comedy). Since the more objective arguments for deletion are not compelling, I treat the passage as authentic and have discussed its impact within the recognition scene as a whole (487–584 n.). It is worth noting, however, that the discussion of the footprints and cloth (532–44) could be omitted without difficulty, as F. W. Schmidt and L. Radermacher proposed (cf. Fraenkel 1950.822 n. 3). Lines 545–6 are corrupt but follow 531 comfortably, and a debate about the lock alone (as in Sophocles) would be less eccentric than a debate about all three signs.

»» (deleting 518–44) Mau 1877, Fraenkel 1950.3.821–6 (summarizing Mau's arguments and controversially eliminating the footprints from the recognition scene of *Choephori* as well), Bain 1977, Kovacs 1989; (deleting all but 524–6 and either 518–9 or 545–6) West 1980.17–22; (retaining all) Lloyd-

Jones 1961, Vögler 1967.168 nn. 107–8, Bond 1974, Donzelli 1980, Davies 1998, Gallagher 2003. See also 487–584 n.

518. But maybe etc.: the Old Man makes his suggestion tentatively, and quite differently from Aeschylus's Electra (who doubts only whether Orestes has come in person, *Cho.* 170ff.) or Sophocles' Chrysothemis (S. *El.* 902ff.).

519. did honour: cf. 84, LSJ 'θαυμάζω' 2b. The different use of the verb after 516 is not unusual (cf. Diggle 1977.118 n. 14, Collard on *Supp.* 16b–17, Donzelli 1980.109f.).

528. when one is tended in a nobleman's wrestling-grounds: the wrestler's hair is coarsened by being cut, uncombed, ground in the dust and perhaps bleached because he spends more time out of doors than a woman (cf. Pentheus on hair and complexions, *Ba.* 455–8).

529. combed and feminine: Electra's logic ignores the present condition of her own hair (108, 148, 241) as well as the rigours of Orestes' exile (203–5).

533. [measures the same: lit. 'will prove similar in measure'; for **γενήσεται** 'will prove' see Verdenius 1987.3 on *HF* 36.]

535. an impression: the metaphor in **ἔκμακτρον** (found only here) is from stamping or moulding: see LSJ 'ἐκμάσσω' II.

538. if...actually: Denniston translates 'even if', but both here and in 542 καί probably coheres with what follows (cf. *GP* 303f.). [The if-clause is incomplete as it stands, probably because a line referring to Orestes' activity has been lost. Musgrave's μόλοι makes it complete and the argument even more hypothetical, 'if he were to come' rather than 'if he has come'.]

544. unless it grew up etc.: this is unusually humorous for tragedy, but not incongruous in the context of this debate. Denniston compares Menelaus' enquiry about Helen's weight (*Tro.* 1050, but the tone of this is disputed) and Iphigenia's wondering how Pylades could take a message to Greece if she killed him (*IT* 740). On such 'jokes' in tragedy see Gregory 1999–2000.

545–6. either some stranger etc.: the sentence seems incomplete (hardly because the Old Man interrupts Electra: see Mastronarde 1979.70). Also the medial caesura in 546 is very unlikely in Euripides (West 1982.83 n. 18, Donzelli 1987), and **σκοποὺς λαβόν** 'taking observers' would hardly make sense even in a complete sentence (hence Victorius' σκοποὺς λαθών, 'eluding the guards', cf. 93.) A lost line seems indicated, or two half-lines between **τῆσδ(ε)** and **σκοποὺς** to eliminate the caesura problem. In A. *Cho.* 180 Electra is almost sure that the lock is Orestes' and infers he has *sent* it, but that is unlikely to be her suggestion here since she has rejected the premiss. She may think that a local person has defied authority (despite the Old Man's doubt, 517; cf. S. *El.* 932–3 following 907–15), or that her own visitors have made the dedication (which would link well with the next line).

549. Here they come now, swift-footed: this may be just an elevated way of saying that they enter promptly (Davies 1998.400 n. 46), but the poetic word λαιψηρός may have some characterizing force. It appears mainly in the *Iliad* (10x), Pindar (3x), Bacchylides (2x) and Euripides (7x). Seven of the Homeric

instances involve heroes fleeing or pursuing (especially Hector and Achilles, *Il.* 21.264, 22.24, 144, 204). Electra's phrase also describes Euripides' Hecuba and Helen fleeing (*Hec.* 1039, *Hel.* 555), but there is no suggestion of fleeing here. Denniston saw a suggestion of their athletic demeanour and nobility (like 'swift-footed' Achilles, 439, 451) which in turn provokes the Old Man's sceptical response (cf. Donzelli 1978.240f.).

550–1. Well, they are noble etc.: the Old Man's scepticism echoes that of Orestes in 368–72. **ἐν...κιβδήλῳ τόδε**, lit. 'that's in the [realm of the] counterfeit'; for the neuter adjective used abstractly cf. 345 n. The comparison between deceptive human character and counterfeit metal or coinage was well established, e.g. Theognis 117–28, 963–8, E. *Med.* 516–9, *Hipp.* 616f., Ar. *Frogs* 718–33. The metaphor continues as the Old Man examines Orestes like a new coin, looks for an identifying mark, and finds the scar. »» Stieber 2009.

553–62. Orestes' brief dialogue with Electra continues the dramatic ironies of their earlier conversation: 555 **our father, stranger,** 557 **if he survives** (cf. *Cresphontes* F 447.26), 560 **a comrade of Orestes** (cf. Penelope's comment on the disguised Odysseus, *Od.* 19.358–60), 561 **Orestes is certainly dear to me,** 562 **stranger.**

553–4. Which of your friends etc.: this is usually taken to mean 'Whose slave is this poor old man?', but it may be simply 'Who is this poor old man?' ('Of whom amongst your friends is this the aged remnant?'). The latter is the more natural question and (as Distilo points out) the one Electra answers. **this old remnant of a man** is often considered rude and dismissive, but it could be sympathetic (cf. Lloyd 1986.14; for Dale 1969.275 it stresses 'how old and frail is their one link with the past').

564. What in the world: lit. 'What concerning things absent, and what concerning things existing'; cf. S. *Ant.* 1108, S. *El.* 305, Wilamowitz on *HF* 1106.

568. Are you perhaps not in your right mind: lit. 'You're not no longer thinking well?', cf. Penelope reacting to Eurycleia (*Od.* 23.10–14), and Electra to Chrysothemis (S. *El.* 879, 920–2). [**μή** with indicative (like μῶν = μὴ οὖν, 504 n.) is used for hesitant suggestions (*SMT* §269) or questions (e.g. *Hipp.* 799, *Tro.* 178, *IA* 1502: Diggle 1977.116f., Moorhouse 1972.320). L has the indicative mistakenly altered to subjunctive φρονῇς.]

570. with this incredible claim: ἀνέλπιστον λόγον is in apposition to the sentence, if L's text is correct. [Wecklein's τίν(α) gives a more normal construction, 'what (kind of) incredible statement have you made...', cf. *Hel.* 471, *Pho.* 915, S. *Trach.* 184. »» Sansone 1984.338.]

573–4. What mark have you observed etc.: strict stichomythia is interrupted for the crucial revelation. The wording recalls Odysseus's scar, 'where a boar once gored him with its white tusk when he followed Autolycus and his sons to Parnassus' (*Od.* 19.393f., 21.219f.). **where he once was cut:** lit. 'which he once was bloodied (with)'.

577–8. My heart is convinced: lit. 'I am heart-convinced', cf. 402 n. **proofs:** the plural does not necessarily include the rejected proofs. In *IT* 822 plural τεκμήρια refers to a single proof, the spear of Pelops.

579–81. I'm holding you etc.: the emotional climax comes in hemistichomythia as in S. *El.* 1220–6.

582. But if I pull in the catch etc.: Orestes rebuts a doubt raised by the thought that they are friendless (for **δέ...γε** see *GP* 155). It is much more likely that a line is lost after 582 (e.g. 'we shall triumph and regain our patrimony') than that Orestes leaves his sentence incomplete or that Electra interrupts him and speaks lines 583–4.

583–4. or we must acknowledge the gods no longer etc.: by enforcing justice the gods prove that they exist and/or observe men's injustices: cf. Hom. *Od.* 24. 351f., A. *Ag.* 1578–82, E. *Supp.* 731–3, *HF* 772f., 841f., *Ba.* 1325f., F 577, F 835, F 912b (= F 1131 Nauck, adesp. F 624 Kannicht), F 991. The chorus in Sophocles' *Oedipus* famously asks why it should continue to honour the gods if they do not attend to the punishment of human transgressions (*OT* 883–910). In Euripides' *Bellerophon* (F 286) the hero complains that the prevalence of injustice in the world proves that there are no gods in heaven. On such challenges in Greek prayers see Pulleyn 1997.199ff.

585–95. *Choral celebration.* A brief song makes a pause between the two parts of the episode, as in *Hipp.* 362–72 ~ 669–79, *Supp.* 918–24, [A.] *PV* 687–95, S. *Trach.* 205–24, and (making three parts) *Phil.* 391–403 ~ 507–18. The metre is dochmiac (x – – ⏑ – etc.) with a few sequences in double-short 'enoplian' rhythm (586, 588, 590, also analysable as anapaestic-iambic: Dale 1983.66, Donzelli 1995a.78f.). Word-repetitions (*anadiplosis*: 585, 590, 592, 593) enhance the joyful mood.

Lines 585–7 combine two motifs: the light of day bringing liberation from darkness and fear (cf. 866–8 and e.g. A. *Pers.* 300f., *Ag.* 264f., 1577, S. *Ant.* 100–5, E. *Ion* 1466f.), and the hero identified as a glorious or saving light (cf. 449 n.). In praise poetry the hero or victor may also bring the light of noble achievement to his family or community, e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 10.23, *Pyth.* 8.96f., *Nem.* 3.84, *Isthm.* 4.40–5 (note πυρσόν 'beacon-fire'), Bacchyl. 3.90f., 13.82 (πυρσόν again). These associations lead to the imaging of Orestes as a victor in the song's second half (590–5: victory as a divine gift and prayer for continued good fortune are both encomiastic motifs). They are taken up in the next scene by Orestes (614 n.) and Electra (675 n., 691 n.), and later when Orestes is greeted as victor over Aegisthus (761f., 854f., 859–79 n., 880–5 n.). Similar imagery marks the restoration of Orestes in *Choephori* (131, 809–11, 863–5, 961) and Clytemnestra's greeting of the victorious Agamemnon (*Ag.* 522, 601–4). Both precedents cast an ironic shadow on the anticipation of Orestes' 'victory' here.

596–698. *Planning and departure.* Few words have passed between Electra and Orestes after the recognition. This does not necessarily suggest they lack human

feeling, for the drama presses on towards the planning, execution and aftermath of the vengeance. The celebration in *Choephori* 235–45 is equally brief, while in Sophocles' *Electra* dramatic context and purpose make Electra's climactic celebration a different matter (S. *El.* 1227–87; Orestes' curtailment of it is in fact more marked there, where the danger is more pressing). Still, the opportunity to engage sympathy for the couple's joy is largely neglected and we see a dour reunion, fraught with nervous tension and the pressure of events. In the planning that follows the pressure on Orestes in particular is emphasized as first the Old Man and then Electra seize the initiative, hatching plots for him to execute; he has no part in planning his mother's death.

As in Euripides' other 'recognition and intrigue' plays the plotting is done in an elaborate stichomythia. All three plotters then join in a series of invocations (671–83 n.), and the scene closes with an exhortation stressing the difficulty, dangers and rewards of the coming action (685–98: cf. *Ion* 1029–47, *IT* 1056–88, *Hel.* 1085–1106). The stichomythia (612–70) is divided equally between the two victims and gives three to five couplets to each step: *(a)* 612–7 the general problem and Orestes' perplexity, 618–27 Aegisthus's whereabouts and business, 628–33 his defences, 634–9 the plan of attack (stopping suspensefully short of completion); *(b)* 640–5 Clytemnestra's movements, 646–9 Electra's intervention (see 647 n.), 650–4 the pretended childbirth, 655–62 her plan of attack (stopping suspensefully short of completion). The planning is notably different from that of *Choephori* (554–78), though in both scenes it is incomplete and misleading. In Aeschylus's play Orestes appeals to Apollo's command and plans to arrive in disguise at the palace, demand hospitality, and kill Aegisthus as soon as he confronts him; he does not mention Clytemnestra at all. What happens is that Aegisthus proves to be absent, Orestes is met by his mother at the door and must announce his own death to her, and Aegisthus must then be lured back by the Chorus's message conveyed by the Nurse. In Euripides' play the plot against Aegisthus proceeds exactly as planned, except that lines 637–41 suggest that Orestes will kill him at the feast (as in the earlier poetic and artistic tradition, and as he expects to in *Choephori*); the killing at the sacrifice itself will come as a shock. The luring of Clytemnestra is also entirely successful, but the planning gives no hint of the effect her arrival will have on Orestes (967ff.).

On the character and moral implications of the plots see below, 652–8 n., 747–858 n.

596–7. Well, then etc.: insistence on getting back to business is almost formulaic after a recognition (e.g. *Odyssey* 21.222–8, S. *El.* 1288–94, E. *IT* 902–6; Emlyn-Jones 1984.6f.). This emphasizes rather than undercuts the sincerity of the joy that must be controlled. Denniston's suggestion that Orestes is 'less demonstrative than his sister' and refuses to return her embrace is unconvincing. The sad reality is that the process Orestes now begins will lead to renewed separation and exile.

600. an unholy marriage: the adjective ὅσιος and noun ὁσία refer to acts or agents that are acceptable to the gods (Parker 1983.330, Chadwick 1996.221–6). The negative ἀνόσιος is used four times in this scene (cf. 645, 677, 683) and twice later (926, 1170) for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, their crime and their marriage. The matricides confront their own 'unholiness' only after the event (1203f.).

601. Is there any goodwill: **εὐμενὲς** is a neuter adjective used as an abstract as in 345, 550, S. *El.* 1203 τὸ τῶνδ' εὔνουν 'these women's goodwill'.

602. or am I wholly bereft etc.: i.e. 'have I lost all my friends as well as all my status and possessions?' [For the syntax of **κἄντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ(α)** see 402 n. ἀνασκευάζω normally refers to packing up and removing property (σκεύη). The metaphor here may be from this basic sense (LSJ I.2) or the specialized 'become bankrupt' (LSJ I.4).]

606–7. no one is a friend etc.: a commonplace, e.g. Theognis 79–82 (echoed here), Pind. *Nem.* 10. 78f., S. *Aj.* 680–3, F 733, E. *HF* 57–9, *Pho.* 402f.; cf. 82–5 n. on the friendlessness of exiles. The theme of friendship is pursued in *Orestes* (Willink 1986.xliv).

608. from the ground up: lit. 'from your foundations', cf. *HF* 1306 (Hera ruining Heracles), Soph. F 501.

610–1. Everything depends etc.: lit. 'You hold everything in your own arm (cf. LSJ 'χείρ' IV) and in fortune'; cf. A. *Cho.* 237 (Electra), 'trusting in your valour you'll regain your father's house'. **Fortune** (τύχη) here and in 648 is the element in events that is unpredictable and uncontrollable by humans; the situation is risky and requires luck as well as judgement and a just cause. The Old Man is not excluding the element of divine will, which Orestes will emphasize after his success (890–2). In *Iphigenia in Tauris* Pylades reminds Orestes that 'wise men' seize the opportunites that fortune offers, and Orestes agrees that 'this is a matter for fortune along with ourselves. When someone is determined, the divine power is apt to show more strength' (*IT* 907–11: cf. Cropp 1995.37f.). »» Dover 1974.138–41, Giannopoulou 1999–2000.257–61.

614. That is the crown etc.: the athletic metaphor recurs, disguising the darker side of Orestes' mission (751, 761f., 854–89 *passim*): cf. Introduction, p. 19.

615. [Not...even if: **οὐδ' ἂν εἰ** = οὐκ ἀν [λάβοις]...εἰ καί. Diggle 1981. 37f. compares *Andr.* 595, *Hel.* 434, F 223.5.]

616. He's well equipped etc.: κέκασται is an epic word (LSJ 'καίνυμι'), in tragedy only here and A. *Eum.* 766. **bodyguards:** lit. 'spearsmen's right arms'. δορυφόροι was the standard term for royal bodyguards. Aegisthus has bodyguards in the final scene of *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 1649ff.), but in *Choephori* the Chorus's message lures him to the palace without them (*Cho.* 766ff.).

620–2. May you disclose etc.: Orestes responds as if the Old Man has seen an omen, using the appropriate formulae. He 'wishes' that the information may be useful, and 'accepts' the reply as confirming that it is. He is not being ironic and petulant as Denniston suggests. **something useful:** cf. S. *El.* 646, LSJ

'ἐσθλός' II.3. **I accept the utterance**: cf. S. *El.* 668 with Jebb's note, E. *Ion* 561, *Pho.* 858. **προσηκάμην** (from προσίημι) is 'instantaneous aorist'.

625–7. Preparing a feast for the Nymphs etc.: the ceremony is described by the Messenger, 800ff. Nymphs typically lived in caves, which are abundant in the rocky landscape of Greece and might be developed as sanctuaries with watered gardens etc. adjoining. Aegisthus will actually pray for the well-being of himself and Clytemnestra (805–7). This fits the Nymphs' broad function as bringers of health and prosperity as well as childbearing and rearing (1 n.). They were imagined as nubile girls (*numphai*, cf. 178–80 n.) sharing the interests of Artemis, the goddess with whom they were often associated. »» *OCD* 'nymphs', 'nymphaeum', Burkert 1985.150f., 173, Larson 2001 (pp. 9, 226–58 on caves and sanctuaries).

629. a party from his household: cf. LSJ 'χείρ' V, Willink on *Or.* 445.

631. They are slaves etc.: 'They are, on the one hand, house-slaves, who (on the other hand) have never seen *you*.' The clause contrasted with the μέν-clause is subordinated to it (cf. *GP* 379, though Denniston explains differently in *GP* 364 and in his commentary). The Old Man assumes that none of the house-slaves who knew Orestes as a child is still serving Aegisthus (the Tutor assures Orestes similarly in S. *El.* 1339f.). Orestes will in fact be recognized by an old house-slave (852f.), but the contradiction is trivial. [L's 'whom *I* have never seen' makes an oddly oblique answer to Orestes' simple question but is preferred by Denniston and more recently Kamerbeek 1987.279f. and others. For γε lightly emphasizing the pronoun σέ see *GP* 121–3.]

633. that's typical of slaves: i.e. they are loyal to whoever is their master, cf. F 93, F 313. It is equally easy to find assertions that slaves can be noble and loyal, e.g. *Ion* 854–6, *Hel.* 728–32, 1640f., F 495.40–3, F 511. »» Aélion 1983. 2.178–80.

637. he'll see you etc.: the etiquette of hospitality, especially in connection with sacrifices, e.g. Hom. *Od.* 3.31ff., Heliodorus 4.16.3ff. The mention of the feast is dramatically misleading (above, 596–698 n.).

639. as the dice fall: lit. 'according to what falls', i.e. 'play it by ear.' For the metaphor cf. 1100, Bond on *HF* 1228.

643. She stayed behind etc.: i.e. she was afraid to travel publicly with Aegisthus because of their adulterous relationship (cf. 30 n.). In tragedy δημόται are just ordinary people, not democratic 'co-citizens' (Most 1985.327–30).

646. How, then etc: i.e. 'should I wait for her to arrive?' [L leaves the line unpunctuated, 'How then will I kill both her and him together?', but there is an obvious answer to this, as Denniston says ('by waiting until she arrives'). Electra's response ('I'll deal with her myself') shows the direction of Orestes' question.]

647. *I* shall contrive etc.: Electra's intervention after 62 lines of silence is highly dramatic. There was probably no precedent for her seizing the initiative in this way. In *Choephori* her role ends when Orestes sends her into the palace at the end of the planning scene (*Cho.* 579f.). In S. *Electra* she resolves to kill

Aegisthus on hearing that Orestes is dead (947ff.), but Orestes controls the action after the recognition.

648. and fortune as well: Orestes echoes the Old Man's comment about their dependence on fortune (610–1 n.); **that** is naturally understood as the attack on Clytemnestra, not on Aegisthus as Denniston takes it.

649. First, let the old man etc.: μὲν marks the first step as in 664. [Weil's δ' εἷς would give 'and let this one assist us two', a common rhetorical contrast (see Denniston), but **ὅδε** probably makes the contrast sufficiently.]

650. So be it etc.: L gives this line to the Old Man, probably rightly. [L's choice only reflects an educated guess since ancient dramatic texts generally identified speakers with dashes (*paragraphi*: see e.g. Turner 1987.15). Dobree preferred Orestes since 649 was addressed to him and **old man** in 651 could mark a change of speaker. But ὅδε in 649 could equally do that, and 650 looks like the first step in the Old Man's questioning of Electra. It certainly is if 651 is deleted. »» Donzelli 1991a.7f.]

651–2. L gives both these lines to Electra. Possibly a response from the Old Man has dropped out after 651, but more probably 651 is an interpolation designed (perhaps by someone who assigned 650 to Orestes) to make it clear that 652 is addressed to the Old Man. [The stichomythia might be interrupted for dramatic effect (like 574–5), but the repetition **tell...report** is awkward. With 651 deleted the Old Man is not told to whom he should take his message, but that is obvious enough without it. »» Kovacs 1987.261–3.]

652–8. Report that I'm confined etc.: Electra's 'fatal marriage' was due to Aegisthus's fear of her bearing noble children and Clytemnestra's residual sense of maternal duty (20–42). Clytemnestra will now pay both for violating this duty and for not violating it ruthlessly enough, a weakness ruthlessly exploited by Electra. The point is stressed by Clytemnestra's diversion from a ceremony concerning her children with Aegisthus. Electra shows insight in choosing her bait, but the plan also seems to reflect her own preoccupation with her deprivations and resentment of her mother's comfortable new marriage. Kubo (1966) argued that she counts on Clytemnestra's wanting to suppress her daughter's child, as in many legends of sequestered daughters (Perseus's mother Danae, Cyrus's mother Mandane in Hdt. 1.107ff., etc.), but this is hard to reconcile with what the Peasant has said in the prologue and with Clytemnestra's behaviour in her scene with Electra.

654. those of isolation etc.: lit. 'in which a woman who has given birth is *hagnos*'; on *hagneia* see 256 n. A woman after giving birth must avoid contacts which might spread her defilement. The 'tenth-day sacrifice' (*dekatê*) ended the period of strong defilement and was usually performed by those who had assisted at the birth (cf. 1124–8). It was probably distinct from the *amphidromia*, in which the child was carried around the hearth to show its acceptance into the household; but details are not easy to establish from our sources. »» Zeitlin 1970.652 n. 26, Parker 1983.48–52, Hamilton 1984, Golden 1986 (esp. 252–6), *ThesCRA* VI.2f., 5.

657. †*And why*†: Electra's answer presupposes a simple 'Do you think she cares...?' Weil's conjecture gives this sense, Diggle's 'Do you think such a woman cares...'

658. she'll deplore my child's low birth: the low birth would satisfy Aegisthus's plan (39–42), but Electra counts on her mother's weaknesses: sentimentality, conformism, unwillingness to accept consequences. A suggestion that she would worry about the *high* status of Electra's child (Kubo: see 652–8 n.) would need to be more explicit and is hardly consistent with **deplore**.

659. back to the finish: καμπὴν is lit. 'turning-post', but on Greek running tracks the turning-post doubled as the finishing-post (Barrett on *Hipp.* 87).

660. she perishes: the present tense **ἀπόλλυται** suggests a future certainty, or more precisely that Clytemnestra's coming and her perishing are simultaneous (*SMT* §32, Wackernagel 1926–8.I.162).

663. If only I could die etc.: cf. 279–82 n.

668. you've drawn first trial of murder: i.e. the first opportunity to bring one of Agamemnon's killers to justice. Legal terms are used elsewhere for the punishment of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (484, 953–4). Athenian homicide law made the family of the deceased responsible for prosecuting a murderer. »» Kells 1966.51f. comparing esp. Dem. 21.120, [Arist.] *Ath Pol.* 57.2.

671–83. The planning scene culminates in prayers for the help of Zeus, Hera, Agamemnon and (with him) the ghosts of the dead. Some other planning scenes end with short speeches of supplication, e.g. *IT* 1082–8, *Hel.* 1093–1106, S. *El.* 1376–83. Here the atmosphere is heightened by a series of ritualistic invocations (cf. A. *Sept.* 128–50 with Hutchinson's note). There is a clear line of descent to this from the great antiphonal Kommos of *Choephori* (315–478), especially the second half turning from lament to vengeance, and the following prayers (479–513) which lead into the revenge action. The earlier scenes of *Choephori* are shaped around a sequence of similar prayers to Zeus, Hermes, Agamemnon, Earth and the nether powers (1–21, 124–48, 244–63), and more prayers accompany the revenge action (722–9, 783–818, 855–68). All those prayers invoke the supernatural powers as protectors and allies in enforcing justice and vengeance, the rights of Agamemnon's heirs, and the survival of his family. Euripides' scene recalls all this (see notes below and in general Pulleyn 1997.126–9), but in a rather perfunctory fashion. In *Orestes* 1231–9 the motif descends towards parody, with Orestes, Electra and Pylades again demanding help from Agamemnon, Zeus and Justice — in the assassination of Helen.

The distribution of parts is debated. L gives them all to Orestes except for responses by Electra in 673 and 676. Kovacs and Distilo follow this exactly, while Donzelli (following Di Benedetto) gives the responses to the Old Man and the appeal to Hera (674–5) to Electra. Kvičala divided the whole sequence line-by-line between Orestes, Electra and the Old Man (similarly Wecklein and Diggle, and with minor variations Murray and Denniston; Kirchhoff favoured a line-by-line division between Orestes and Electra only). There is no good reason to subdivide the prayers in 671–2 and 674–5 (see 672 n.), and 676 is

clearly the Old Man's, which suggests that 673 is his as well. Probably, then, Orestes prays to Zeus, Electra prays to Hera, and the Old Man seconds both prayers (the same pattern as in the *Choephori* kommos and *Orestes* 1231ff., where respectively the Chorus and Pylades are the supporting voices). As for the rest, 678 probably belongs to Electra and 679 again to the Old Man (see notes below); and if that is right, 680–1 and 683 (which obviously must precede 682) are best distributed similarly. Kovacs and Donzelli think the loss of *paragraphi* throughout 678–83 unlikely, but it may be due to an ancient editorial decision after one or two of them were accidentally omitted. »» Denniston, Di Benedetto 1961.320f., Kovacs 1987.263–5, Donzelli 1991a.9–12, Slings 1997. 153f., Distilo.

671. Zeus Paternal, Router: the titles are anagrams of each other, perhaps suggesting that the one implies the other. Zeus was **Paternal** (*Patroios*) as 'Father of Gods and Men', patriarch of the Olympian family, guardian and arbiter of families, inheritance rights and father-son relationships. He is invoked repeatedly in *Choephori* (far more than in Euripides' play), especially *Cho.* 18f., 246–55, 407–9, 783–99; similarly Zeus's son Hermes (a link with the dead), *Cho.* 1f., 124ff. Zeus was also the founder of Orestes' family as father of Tantalus (673, *Or.* 5) and connected with Agamemnon in cult at Sparta (Farnell 156 n. 93). He was **Router** (*Tropaios*: see LSJ) as arbiter of victory in battle, normally credited by the victors' trophies on the battle-field (*tropaia*, 'rout-markers') and later dedications (as at Olympia in great numbers; cf. *HF* 49f.; at *Hcld.* 936f. and *Pho.* 1250f., 1473 a trophy is 'Zeus's *tropaios* image'). »» Farnell 1896.52–62, 156–66, Burkert 1985.125–31; (trophies) Pritchett 1974.246–75; (Zeus Tropaios in Euripides) Stieber 2011.135.

672. Have pity: Electra calls on her father for pity in *Cho.* 130, 502. **[οἴκτιρέ γ'** is probably the right correction of L's plural imperative, γε being intensive (**Have *pity*..., for *pitiably*...**); it need not imply a change of speaker. οἴκτιρον (aorist) is unlikely given the repetition **οἴκτιρε δῆτα** in the next line, like **δὸς...δὸς δῆτα**, 675f.]

674. Hera: see 167–212 n.

675. Give us victory if our request is just: the if-clause rhetorically justifies the demand for victory but may also hint that equating victory (*nikê*) with justice (*dikê*) is too simple. In *Cho.* 147f. Electra asks her father to aid her, 'together with the gods (of the underworld), Earth, and Justice who brings victory (Δίκῃ νικηφόρῳ)'; cf. *Cho.* 476–8, 497–9. Goldhill 1986b.44–75 discusses the uncertainty of the equation in the *Oresteia* ('the uneasy relation between 'justice' and 'conflict' that constitutes an essential dynamic of the narrative of violent revenge', 45); see also Rutherford 2012.92–4.

677–83. And thou, father etc.: Agamemnon is to appear from beneath the earth as heroes were often supposed to, especially to aid their people in battle (»» Burkert 1985.207, Pritchett 1980.11–46). The appeal is stylized and ritualistic. Bond on *HF* 490–6 traces common elements there and in A. *Pers.* 633–80 (cf. Broadhead 1960.302–9), *Cho.* 306–509, S. *El.* 1066–81, E. *El.* 677–84, *Or.*

1225–42, including a 'statement of communication' (682f.), imperative requests (679f.), and provocative taunts (677, 682). See also Ogden 2001.175–8.

678. And Lady Earth etc.: Earth (Gaia, mother of life) is invoked together with Agamemnon because she must release his ghost if he is to rise up and give aid (cf. A. *Pers.* 628–30, 640–6, *Cho.* 127f., 148, 399, 489, 722–5). Beating on the ground gets the attention of Earth, the underworld gods and the dead who must be made to listen and respond, especially to prayers for vengeance (e.g. A. *Cho.* 4f., 139, 315–8, 332, 399, 405–8). In a Greek context the beating is typically done by females (Meleager's wife in Hom. *Il.* 9.568, Hera in *Hom. Hymn* 3.332–40, Hecuba in E. *Tro.* 1302–9; the Persian elders in A. *Pers.* 683 are a rule-proving exception), and so probably by Electra here.

680. Come now: such requests are common in prayers calling for the presence of gods or assistance from the underworld (e.g. *HF* 494, S. *El.* 110–7): »» Pulleyn 1997.136, 140–4.

682, 684. Have you heard etc.: cf. 199–201 n. Prayers to the dead often express doubt whether they hear (or listen), e.g. A. *Cho.* 495f., *Or.* 1231–4. The topic is not merely poetic: »» Bond on *HF* 490–6, Dover 1974.243–6 (add Isocr. 14.61, Pl. *Menex.* 248b 7). [L makes 684 the first line of Electra's speech ('Our father...') as it must be if the following text is sound, but the assurance and call to action come plausibly from the Old Man in his supporting role, as from the Chorus in A. *Cho.* 510–3 and Pylades in *Or.* 1241f.]

693. therefore (lit. 'towards/in response to this') **you must play the man:** this foreshadows Electra's much more violent demand as Orestes hesitates on Clytemnestra's approach (982). [Line 693 almost certainly follows 684, whether or not any of lines 685–92 are retained (see next note). Keeping it after 692 requires giving two words to Orestes (**πάντ' οἶδα**, 'I know it all') and the rest of the line to Electra. Victorius did this in the first printed edition of *Electra*, and many editors have agreed (recently Kovacs and Donzelli), but such an interruption is out of place in the middle of Electra's speech and it is hard to believe that **πάντ', οἶδα** in 693 is not a repetition of **πάντ', οἶδ(α)** in 684. Kovacs translates 'I understand you perfectly', but that is not what πάντ' οἶδα means.]

[685–8], 689–92. The anomalies in these lines have prompted various deletions by editors. Electra exhorts Orestes twice (685, 693) and twice announces that she will kill herself if he fails (686–8, 695–8). 686–8 and 690–2 are phrased similarly (**For if...**). There are several linguistic and stylistic oddities, not all of which are easily corrected (see notes below). Probably 685–8 are an actor's interpolation making the most of Electra's fears and thoughts of suicide. 689–92 could be another interpolation, but the language is less crude and it makes sense for Electra to explain her own movements before instructing the Chorus, and to say more to Orestes than **You must play the man.** »» Page 1934.75f., Jackson 1955.234–7, Broadhead 1968.130–5, Diggle 1981.38f., Kovacs 1984.239, Donzelli 1991a.12–18, Distilo.

[**685. And I declare to you etc.:** the verb **προφανῶ** usually refers to a public or oracular proclamation and seems out of place in this context. The use of **πρὸς τάδ(ε)** is also abnormal (Diggle 1981.38) and duplicates the (normal) use in 693. **Aegisthus must die:** lit. 'Aegisthus to die', as if in a decree or a prayer (cf. 805–8 n.). Seidler's κτανεῖν normalizes the construction: 'I command you to kill Aegisthus' (cf. *Or.* 1130).]

[**686. παλαισθείς, outwrestled** seems to stand for καταπαλαισθείς ('wrestled down', 'thrown'). The passive of παλαίω itself is not otherwise attested before the first century B.C. (*Anth.Pal.* 9.411.5 cited by Denniston; in E. *Cyc.* 678 παλαίεσθαι is middle, not passive.]

[**687–8. I too am dead etc.:** the bizarre **strike my head** can be avoided with Reiske's 'heart' or Geel's 'liver' (a standard target of suicide or murder blows in tragedy), but the whole couplet is implausibly exaggerated.]

689. ...going inside etc.: a line is probably missing before this, as Jackson suggested. [The line as it stands lacks a connective (hence Victorius's ⟨δ'⟩) and **εὑτρεπὲς ποιήσομαι** needs an object ('I shall make *x* ready'; a simple 'I shall make ready' is idiomatic in English but not in Greek). Nauck, Diggle and others delete the line along with 685–8, but 690–2 connect better with 689 than with 693.]

690–2. For if happy information comes etc.: some of the language here is mediocre (**πόστις, information** is prosaic, and **it will be the opposite of this** is banal), but the idea of the house's celebration anticipates the scene of Orestes' triumphant return (860ff.) and **that I say to you** links well with **And you, women....** Women's **ululation** (*ololygmos*, still common in the Middle East and North Africa) was used in various contexts, especially sacrifice, prayer and thanksgiving (»» Pulleyn 1997.178–81). Thus the sacrificial aspect of Aegisthus's murder is foreshadowed here. In *Choephori* the Chorus looks forward to celebrating the deaths of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus with ululation (*Cho.* 386–9), and later does so (942). Garvie's note on *Cho.* 386–9 traces the thematic use of the *ololygmos* throughout the *Oresteia*.

694–5. cry out the beacon-news: lit. 'pass on (like a beacon) the shouting from the contest'. The Chorus will do this when they hear the distant shouting of those witnessing Aegisthus's death (747–60). The metaphor offers an ironic contrast with Clytemnestra's watchman waiting for the beacon-news of the fall of Troy (A. *Ag.* 8–11, 26–30, where the news also invites an *ololygmos*).

696. brandishing a sword: a further ironic contrast between Electra and Aeschylus's Clytemnestra, who uses her weapon so decisively against Agamemnon (cf. 160–1 n.) and cries for an axe to defend herself against Orestes (*Cho.* 889). **ἔγχος** (usually 'spear') is clearly a sword here and sometimes elsewhere in tragedy (e.g. *Alc.* 76, *HF* 233; Jebb on S. *Ajax* 95). Electra is presumably not brandishing it when she re-enters at 751, for then she would have to hold it throughout the Messenger's speech.

697–8. For never in defeat etc.: Electra prefers suicide by a 'masculine' and heroic method to the abuses which failure will bring. Such choices are a

common topic in tragedy, e.g. *Helen* 835–42, *Ion* 1061–73, *Orestes* 1035–8. »» Lloyd 1986.15, Fowler 1987.

699–746. Second Stasimon. The Golden Lamb

The Chorus tells the story of the golden lamb sent by Zeus to honour Atreus, king of Mycenae *(Strophe 1)*, how Atreus's brother Thyestes seduced his wife Aerope and with her help stole the lamb and claimed the kingdom *(Antistrophe 1)*, and how Zeus reasserted Atreus's right by reversing the sun's course *(Strophe 2)*. Such tales of divine intervention in human disputes, though hardly credible, serve to deter human impiety and should have deterred Clytemnestra from her crime (*Antistrophe 2*).

This is another 'dithyrambic' stasimon (432–86 n.), again in aeolic metre (112–66 n.: Dale 1981.98f., Diggle ed., Donzelli 1995a.79f., with minor differences in text and colometry). It follows the same pattern as the first stasimon (Csapo 2009.96–9): a joyous natural scene, a darker human subject intruding (Achilles with his terrifying armour, Thyestes' theft), images of violence, disruption and death, and against this narrative background a reflection on Clytemnestra's crime. In the first stasimon the first strophe and antistrophe each built towards the figure of the 'swift-footed' Achilles. Similarly the first strophe here builds gradually towards the **golden lamb** (705) and the herald's proclamation, and the antistrophe again towards the **golden lamb** (719) and the abrupt revelation of Thyestes' treachery and counter-proclamation.

We have extensive accounts of the story of Atreus and Thyestes only from late summarizers. It was widely used by tragedians, with much variation of details, both in passing (cf. esp. *Or.* 807–18, 995–1010) and as material for plots (including Euripides' *Thyestes* and perhaps *Cretan Women*, and an *Atreus* and two or three *Thyestes* plays by Sophocles: »» Gantz 1993.545–50, Collard 2009). Conspicuously absent from this account is the culmination of the story: Atreus punished Thyestes by killing his sons and serving their flesh to him at a banquet. For the story of the sun's reversal see below, 727–36 n.

Beside its exemplary purpose the story is relevant as an earlier episode in the history of the house of Tantalus. Atreus and Thyestes were the fathers of Agamemnon and Aegisthus. The rights of Orestes and Electra can be related to the rights of Atreus, the wrongs and the anticipated punishment of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra to the wrongs of Thyestes and Aerope (who likewise betrayed her husband and his throne to her seducer, 720f.). That the Chorus thinks of Clytemnestra when it reflects on the story (745f.) is consistent with the shaping of the whole play around the issue of her murder. The problem of matricide is still unexpressed, but again as in the first stasimon there are latent negativities which will come to the surface in the play's crisis. The horror of Atreus's revenge on Thyestes was so well known (and so important a dimension of Agamemnon's murder in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, esp. *Ag.* 1085–97, 1217–22, 1242–4, 1338,

1500–4, 1577–1603) that its suppression here seems significant, matching the suppression of thought about the horror of matricide within the play. The account of Zeus's intervention is also interesting in this respect. Justice was enforced on Thyestes, no doubt with the approval of Zeus the god of justice and sovereignty, but not (the Chorus suggests) through a mythical intervention with cosmic effects damaging all humanity (see notes on 737–46). Apollo, we shall find, likewise achieves justice while holding himself remote from the human realm (1190–3, 1244–6, 1292–1307). The Chorus's questioning of the myth thus anticipates the questioning of Apollo's achievement of justice with damage to its human agents at the end of the play.

»» Zeitlin 1970.653f., Donzelli 1978.151–5, Rosivach 1978, Morwood 1981.364–6, Mulryne 1977.31–4, Hose 1990–1.2.46–50, Csapo 2008.279f. Text: Donzelli 1978.299–353 and 1995b, Willink 2005.

699–700. [Still young: L has genitive ἀταλᾶς referring to the lamb's **mother**, but the word always describes young creatures; its etymology is uncertain (Shipp 1979.111). †***of the Argive***† **mountains:** the syntax of **Ἀργείων ὀρέων** is unclear, and lines 699 and 713 are not exactly matched metrically. Editors mark one or the other or both as corrupt, e.g. Donzelli 1995b.883–8 (713 corrupt), Slings 1997.154 (699 corrupt), Kovacs ed. and Willink 2005.11f. (a word lost in each line).]

700–1. so the report endures etc.: lit. 'the report endures…that…', with accusative and infinitive (**Πᾶνα…κορεύσαι**).

702. on deft-joined reeds: the *syrinx polukalamos* ('multi-reed syrinx') or Pan-pipes, supposedly invented by Pan. »» *OCD* 'music' §3.2(b), West 1992.109–12.

704. country-master: Pan protected livestock, like Hermes (458–63 n.) who was usually considered his father. At *Orestes* 997 the golden lamb is born in Hermes' flocks. Both belonged primarily to Arcadia, whose mountains border the western Argolid. »» *OCD* 'Pan'.

705. a fine-fleeced golden lamb: like the ram whose golden fleece Jason had to retrieve to reclaim his kingdom. Herodotus 4.5f. tells of gold objects as symbols of kingship in Scythia.

707. [ἦαχεν (⏑ ⏑ –, epic aorist of ἰάχω) rather than L's ἰάχει (⏑ – –), imperfect of ἰᾱχέω. »» Donzelli 1995b.890, Willink 2005.14.]

708–11. 'Go all etc.': direct quotation enlivens the narrative, as in the Messenger's speech (774–858 n.). There are similar proclamations in other 'dithyrambic' stasima: *Hec.* 929–32, *Tro.* 524–6, *Hel.* 1341–5, *IA* 1062–75 (Panagl 1972). [†***a terror***†**:** see 456–7 n. on the phrasing. Denniston and others find 'terror' inappropriate for the harmless lamb, hence e.g. Hermann's 'demonstration' (of the Atreids' right to kingship); but any prodigy may evoke terror. More seriously, φάσματα δείματα does not match the metre of 725 τὰν κερόεσσαν ἔχειν. A simple correction would be δείματ' (ἰδεῖν), 'a terror <to behold>'. Others require additional adjustments: 'a terror! And revel-bands

honoured... (Erfurdt, with 726 χρυσόμαλλον); 'a strange marvel! And choruses <straightway>...' (Denniston); 'a strange marvel! And with choruses they honoured...' (Diggle, also with χρυσόμαλλον). »» Donzelli 1995b.890–2.]

713–5. Gold-wrought censers were opened etc.: cf. A. *Ag.* 88–96 (Argos celebrating the capture of Troy), 'all the city-gods' altars...are blazing with gifts; all about flame rises to the sky, fed by...oil from the palace's store'. The meaning of line 713 is uncertain, but it probably refers to the burning of incense as an offering to the gods. [Gow showed that 'gold-wrought *thymelai*' must be portable braziers or censers, of which bronze, silver and gold examples are attested. He translated 'braziers were set out' (**ἐπίτναντο** meaning 'strewn, spread about': see LSJ πίτνημι). Robert discusses the practice, at least in Hellenistic times, of setting out temporary altars throughout the city on great festival days, and Diodorus 13.3.2 describes censers and mixing-bowls for libations set out around the Piraeus harbour as the Athenian fleet sailed for Sicily). Gow also thought that **θυμέλαι...ἐπίτναντο** might mean **censers were opened** (to release their smoke), and Distilo justifies this citing examples of censers with removable lids. »» Gow 1912 (summarized in Denniston's note), Robert 1966.194ff., Distilo 2010. *ThesCRA* 5.212–23, 230–43 gives full evidence for smoke-offerings, portable altars and censers.]

716–7. The lotus-pipe: lit. 'the lotus', i.e. aulos (435–7 n.). The lotus or nettle-tree, abundant in Libya, had a black wood almost as hard as ebony and good for woodwind instruments (Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 4.3.1–4, 5.3.1). **servant of the Muses:** a traditional title for poet-singers (like 'servants of Ares' for warriors), e.g. Hes. *Theog.* 100, the mock-epic *Margites* fr. 1.2, Theognis 769, Ar. *Birds* 910, 913; cf. Archilochus fr. 1 *IEG* 'I am a servant of lord Enyalios (= Ares) and one who understands the Muses' gift'; E. *IT* 1104f. 'the melodious swan gives service to the Muses'.

719. †*in celebration of*†: approximate sense. L's **ἐπίλογοι** would normally mean 'explanations' or 'perorations'. [Wecklein' εὐλογίᾳ ('in praise of the lamb') is a moderately plausible conjecture (cf. Pind. *Ol.* 5.24, *Nem.* 4.5 etc., Eur. *HF* 356), but 'praise' seems not quite right in this context. For other suggestions see Denniston, and Willink 2005.16f.]

720. Thyestes' lamb: the unexpected name is stressed by delay and enjambment (completion of the phrase at the start of a new line).

725. the horned, gold-woolled beast: horns are unexpected in a young female lamb (**ἀταλὰν** 699, **χρυσέαν** 705, **τὰν κερόεσσαν** 725), but ewes have horns in some breeds and a lamb of divine origin presumably matures fast. *Odyssey* 4.85 claims that Libyan sheep develop horns rapidly. Herodotus 4.29 and Aristotle *Hist. An.* 606a.18f. repeat this and credit it to the country's hot climate.

727–36. *Zeus changes the course of the sun etc.* This part of the story is first attested here (the references in *IT* 193–7, 812–6, *Or.* 812–5, 1001–6, *Thyestes* F 397b (= F 861 Nauck) and Soph. F 738 are brief and problematic). Our passage probably refers to the myth mentioned by Plato, *Politicus* 268e-269a, that

the sun and stars used to set in the east and rise in the west until 'the god' reversed this to confirm Atreus's right against Thyestes. Later writers add conflicting details and often limit the reversal to a single day. Herodotus 2.142.4 reports Egyptian accounts of four such reversals of the sun's course (without environmental effects). »» Frazer on Apollodorus *epit.* 2.12, Gantz 1993.547f.; Egli 2003.53–62 discusses the Euripidean passages extensively.

Morrison 1970.85–90 (followed by Willink in his commentary) argued that Euripides alludes to a scientific theory that the sun's orbit was originally horizontal but later tilted so that it now rises and sets and distributes heat unevenly over the earth. Euripides' focus on cosmic and climatic changes may have been conditioned by scientific speculations of this kind, but in this context the story is essentially mythical and rejected as such in 737ff. A scientific alternative is no more than hinted at. »» Egli 2003.62–9, 221–5.

727–30. Then, then did Zeus transfer etc.: the stars are included in the other main sources mentioned above (*Or.* 1006f., Pl. *Polit.* 269a5: in F 397b 'stars' seems to refer differently to the sun and planets retrogressing along the ecliptic). **the sun's resplendence etc.:** for the **face of dawn** cf. 102 n. Dawn precedes the sun on the same path through the sky, cf. *IA* 157–9 (this close connection is obscured in the rephrasing of 730–2 proposed by Willink 2005. 18f.). [Hartung's and Willink's supplements in 727 and 737 normalize the metre, but **τότε δὴ τότε** is probably sound as it stands. The phrase recurs in *Or.* 1483 (cf. *Hec.* 930 πότε δὴ πότε) and is rather common in later prose (see *TLG*). Musgrave's **μετέβασ(ε)** is a rare transitive use of this verb (usually 'pass over, change'); its rarity may have caused confusion in the ms. transmission. The scribe of L wrote μεταβάλλει 'transfers' on the line and μεταβὰς 'transferring' above it, probably finding both in his exemplar. μεταβάλλει is unmetrical, and μεταβὰς does not make sense although Triclinius preferred it, deleting μεταβάλλει. Parmentier's μετέβαλεν has some plausibility since the same word is used in *Or.* 1002 and Pl. *Polit.* 269a5. »» Donzelli 1995b.894f.]

731–2. and now he (i.e. the Sun) **drives etc.:** possibly 'drives over the western expanse' (LSJ 'ἐλαύνω' I.1.c), but 'towards' emphasizes the change of direction; cf. *Ion* 1148f. 'Helios was driving (ἤλαυνε) his horses towards their flaming goal'. The abrupt change of subject from Zeus to the Sun is avoided if we translate 'and he (Zeus) afflicts the western expanse' (cf. LSJ 'ἐλαύνω' I.4), but I now think this less likely. **the western expanse: νῶτ(α)** is lit. 'back', an animal metaphor also found in Vedic poetry (West 2007.343); cf. Homer's εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης 'broad expanse of the sea', LSJ 'νῶτον' II.1, and especially E. *Andromeda* F 114 (= Ar. *Thesm.* 1065–8) ἀστεροειδέα νῶτα διφρεύουσ' αἰθέρος ἱερᾶς, '(Night) charioteering the starry expanse of holy Aithêr'.

733–6. Clouds swell with rain etc.: 'Why a reversal of the sun's course produces...a reversal in the climates of northern and southern lands is not clear' (Denniston). Presumably because all the present effects of the sun were previously inverted: on its present east-west course it is (for northerners) always in

the southern sky, at a greater or lesser elevation according to the time of year; so on its old course it was always in the northern sky. Before the change the north was hot and dry, the south cool and wet. Lines 733–6 describe the process of inversion. Herodotus 2.26.2 imagines similarly an inversion of northern and southern climates. »» Kemball-Cook 1950. **Ammon's arid seat** is the oracular shrine of the Egyptian god Amun (identified with Zeus by the Greeks) at the oasis of Siwa in Libya.

737–42. So it is said etc.: or possibly 'It is said – though small is the belief it commands with me – that the golden sun turned about...for the sake of a mortal dispute'. Stinton 1976.79–81 preferred this, arguing that the Chorus only denies, or rather disapproves, Zeus's motivation, not the event itself. But these lines look more like a rejection of the whole story told in 727–36, and the essential point is that mortal disputes do not influence cosmic events. **small is the credit etc.** (lit. 'it holds the credit *small*'): for this structure see Gildersleeve 1900, §§627–9. **for the sake of a mortal dispute:** Denniston prefers 'for the chastening of mortals' with δίκη meaning 'judgement' or 'doom', but a direct reference to the dispute between Atreus and Thyestes seems more appropriate, especially if the underlying idea is that Zeus acted to confirm Atreus's rights. The dispute and other episodes of the legend are systematically imaged as lawsuits in the *Oresteia* and again in this play (e.g. 668, 1093–5, 1155–6). [In 740 Dindorf's ἀμείψαντα provides exact metrical responsion with 730 and is preferred by Willink 2005.21. For **ἀλλάξαντα** cf. *IT* 193.]

743–6. Yet fearful tales are profitable etc.: i.e. they encourage men to worship the gods properly. The common interpretation of this (e.g. by Denniston) as an expression of rationalistic scepticism or a cynical comment ('fearful tales are good for priests' business') is rightly rejected by Stinton. Pious people often value implausible stories that encourage piety. Thus **you were unmindful of them** can easily mean 'you were unmindful of such tales' rather than 'you were unmindful of the gods' (Stinton 1976.88 n. 53), though it may well suggest both. **glorious brothers:** the Dioscuri, cf. 312–3 n., 990–3, 1064 n., 1233–1359 n.

747–858. Third Episode. The murder of Aegisthus

Two short, tense dialogues work up to the report of Aegisthus's death. Stichomythic form enhances the tension (751–60), as do the Chorus-leader's interruption (747), the distant shouts (death-cries are usually close and unmistakable as in 1165–7), Electra's impulse to suicide (anticipated in 695–8), the preparation of the Messenger's arrival (758–60), and Electra's failure to recognize him (765–8).

Long report-speeches were a prominent feature of Greek tragedy, probably from its earliest days when the drama focused on a chorus receiving and reacting to news of great events. For a general survey see Rutherford 2012.200–16. All of Euripides' plays have at least one speech reporting a crucial offstage event and

using the narrative techniques and style of epic poetry, including quoted speeches and detailed descriptions of settings and focal events such as sacrifices. The narrative is carefully organized: preliminaries 774–802, sacrificial sequence culminating in the murder 803–843, aftermath 844–858. The expansive framework of the speech allows modulations in mood and tension. Euripides compounds the suspense by passing over several opportunities for Orestes to strike (798, 817, 836–8, cf. Arnott 1973.55f., 1978.2–4).

Aegisthus is killed during a religious ceremony after welcoming Orestes and his party as guests *(xenoi)*. His unreadiness and vulnerability to Orestes' guile are stressed by the charm and peacefulness of the rustic setting, the warmth and openness of his welcome, and the mundane routine of the ceremony promoting his family's welfare. Orestes on the other hand bends the rules of ritual by pretending to be purified (793 n.), praying silently for his host's death (808f.), and turning his host into a sacrificial victim. His vengeance thus appears crude and unheroic, but Greek ethics did not recommend fair play towards enemies and the Messenger's account does not include any direct criticism of his conduct. In all accounts Orestes takes Aegisthus by surprise and defenceless. Athenian law sanctioned extreme penalties for adulterers (MacDowell 1978.124f.), and killing during a religious ceremony was not necessarily condemned if the victim was sufficiently evil or impious (cf. Parker 1983.159f., 375, and the balanced assessment of Porter 1990.278–80; in Euripides' *Cresphontes* the killing of the usurper Polyphontes by the disguised Cresphontes during a sacrificial ceremony probably had no negative connotations). Aegisthus's hospitality does not lessen the enormity of his past crimes, and his confidence in giving Orestes the chance to kill him may be thought to show a guilty man bringing punishment on himself by his own blindness to danger. As Gärtner points out, his prayer to the nymphs compounds his impiety, and the warning that he reads in the entrails confirms it. In one tradition (reflected in the *Odyssey*, see 8–10 n.) Aegisthus was Agamemnon's host when he murdered him, and a tradition that he murdered him at a sacrifice may also have existed before Euripides, though we know it only from Hyginus, *Fab.* 117 (cf. Servius auct. on Verg. *Aen.* 11.267, Prag 1985.5, Seaford 1984.247; he also killed Agamemnon's father Atreus at a sacrifice according to Hyginus, *Fab.* 88 in an account thought to derive from one of Sophocles' *Thyestes* plays). Certainly the sacrificial killing of Aegisthus recalls the imaging of Agamemnon's murder as a sacrifice in A. *Ag.* 1118, 1433, 1504. Lastly, the killing is associated with a sanctuary in at least one 6th-century image (a metope from Foce del Sele, Prag C8, Pl. 7b with p. 88), so this is not a revolutionary invention of Euripides, though similar 4th-century representations are probably influenced by him (see *LIMC* I 'Aigisthos').

Despite all this, the murder is an ugly event. Aegisthus's personality remains enigmatic (we know him in this play only through the reports of others, cf. 907–56 n.), but the speech sets problems in the enactment of vendetta justice through the gruesome murder of an unsuspecting victim who never recognizes his killer or the onset of justice. It thus anticipates the murder of Clytemnestra in some

respects, but it also differs from it since Aegisthus has no natural claim on his murderers and is lamented by no one.

»» (a variety of opinions) Arnott 1981.186f., Lloyd 1986.16, Easterling 1988.101–4, Hirata 1988, De Jong 1991.14–19, Porter 1990, Gärtner 2008.9f.

748. the nether thunder of Zeus: seismic rumbling, readily associated with the thunder of the sky-god: see Denniston here, Barrett on *Hipp.* 1201, Griffith on [A.] *PV* 1082–3.

751. [How have we fared etc.: for the Greek phrasing cf. 238 n., and for the question Ar. *Wasps* 993.]

755. Argive: i.e. local, and free rather than slave: cf. 517, 629.

757. [What you say etc.: τήνδε is attracted into the gender of σφαγήν; cf. *Ba.* 293, S. *Trach.* 483, *OC* 88; Gildersleeve 1900, §127.]

759. or where are our messengers: expressions of expectation occasionally prepare entries in tragedy (Taplin 1977.137f.). This one, followed immediately by the messenger's arrival, has been seen as a play on the convention of reporting great events offstage promptly through an eye-witness (Winnington-Ingram 1969.131f., Arnott 1973.50f., denied by Taplin, *JHS* 1986.169). Certainly Euripides exploits the generic expectation that someone will bring news, but for dramatic tension rather than ironic self-reference (on this point see Marshall 1999–2000).

761. daughters...glorious in victory: the Messenger sets a tone of celebration which will be developed with the crowning and welcoming of Orestes as a victor: see 859–79 n. and Introduction, p. 19.

765. How can I trust this news: lit. 'in what way trustworthy (are) these things (that) you indicate to me?' Electra's agitation continues. In *Children of Heracles* old age and depression hinder Iolaus from recognizing a messenger sent by his nephew Hyllus (*Hcld.* 638–40).

771. all-seeing Justice: cf. F 255, F 555. Justice is a daughter of the sky-god Zeus who also sees all (1177, Hes. *Works* 267–9). Together they ensure that all transgressions will be punished. The idea of the all-seeing and all-knowing god is Indo-European. »» West on *Works* 267 and 2007.171–3 citing Pettazzoni 1956. **you have come at last:** the idea that justice is slow but sure is common in tragedy and earlier poetry. »» Garvie on A. *Cho.* 61–5.

772. what pattern of murder: ῥυθμός may denote shaping or visual organization rather than rhythmic repetition, e.g. *Hcld.* 130 (dress-style), *Hec.* 924 (hair arrangement), *Supp.* 94 (displays of grief). Here it may anticipate the Messenger's visual analysis of the murder in 838–43. »» Stieber 2011.365–71.

775. a twin-tracked wagon-path: δίκροτος ('double-beating' or 'double-beaten') is usually a nautical or medical term (see LSJ). In this context it may describe a country road with two ruts beaten out by wagons rather than a high road 'broad enough for two chariots to rattle along side by side' (Denniston).

776. the new lord: emphasizing Aegisthus' usurpation, even though he has ruled for several years. **[καινὸς** is Elmsley's correction of L's κλεινός 'glorious'.

In *Heracles* the usurper Lycus is ὁ καινὸς...γῆς ἄρχων (38), ὁ καινὸς γῆς ἄναξ (541), ἄναξ ὁ καινός (768); L has κλεινός in all these places and similar confusions in *Supp.* 593, *Hel.* 1399. Aegisthus is ironically called κλεινός in 327, but as Denniston says, irony is out of place here. Denniston's claim (327 n.) that 'κλεινός is a regular title of royalty' is however groundless, and certainly not proved by his examples (*Or.* 17, S. *OT* 8).]

777–80. We found him walking etc.: the description recalls Nestor welcoming Telemachus and the disguised Athena as he prepares a sacrifice in *Odyssey* 3. 31ff. The orchard is a charming setting for the horror to come. Trees and water are standard elements in the literary *locus amoenus* or place of relaxation (see Nisbet and Hubbard on Horace, *Odes* 2.3.9–12), which is also the usual habitat of nymphs (625–7 n., Larson 2001.8–11 etc.). **sprays of tender myrtle:** see 323–5 n. The association of myrtle with death gives a dramatic irony here. **Greetings, strangers:** ξένος 'stranger' recurs with ironic effect (791, 795, 817, 831) as in Orestes' earlier encounter with Electra (215–99 n.). It is also a *leitmotif* of the scene of Orestes' arrival in *Choephori* (575, 652–718). **Who are you, whence etc.:** traditional questions for unknown visitors, e.g. *Odyssey* 1.170, 3.71. [Wackernagel 1926–8.I.299 notes that πόθεν in the Homeric formula τίς πόθεν ἐσσ' ἀνδρῶν originally meant 'from what father' but came to be understood as 'from what place'.]

781. Thessalians...going to the Alpheus: etiquette allows Orestes to avoid naming himself. He picks a homeland close to Phocis, Pylades' home. Alpheus is the river passing Olympia, a destination offering a plausible reason for passing Argos — and the site of the chariot race in which Orestes is fictitiously killed in Sophocles' *Electra*.

784. [and share the feast with me: Diggle 1981.39 prefers Musgrave's ὁμοῦ ('and share together in the feast') as more idiomatic.]

785–6. I'm sacrificing an ox to the Nymphs: see 625–7 n.

787. you shall...continue as before: lit. 'you shall come to the same point', i.e. your progress will be unaffected. For the idiom see Denniston's note, Barrett on *Hipp.* 273, and e.g. [A.] *PV* 845, Ar. *Birds* 400, *Lys.* 1239f., Pl. *Euthyphr.* 15b11.

790. inside the house: i.e. in the courtyard, like Heracles' sacrifice in *HF* 922ff. The sacrifice would not take place indoors although its noise makes the building resound (802).

791–839. *Sacrificial procedure.* This and other literary descriptions and images offer a composite picture of the normal Greek animal sacrifice to deities. Essential features included lustration of the participants with holy water (791f.), barley-grains scattered on the altar etc. (803f.), prayer (804–10), preliminary burning of hairs from the victim (811f.), killing (813f.), skinning and butchering (819–26), reading of entrails (826–9, 838f.), roasting and eating of the sacrificial meat (835f.): see details in the notes below. »» Denniston on 791ff.; Burkert 1983.3–7, 1985.55–7. Van Straten 1995 analyses the visual evidence

thoroughly with 168 photographs. The Ricci hydria now in Rome (van Straten's no. V154, p. 222 with Fig. 122) shows many details.

791–2. bring washing-water etc.: washing removes the risk of polluting the sacred area, lustral water and implements. **lustrations** (χέρνιβες, see LSJ 'χέρνιψ' 2) cleansed the area and participants and dedicated the victim using water purified by a firebrand taken from the altar (van Straten 1995.31–43). The phrasing of 792 recalls A. *Ag.* 1036–8, where Clytemnestra tells Cassandra that she will be 'a sharer in the lustrations' (κοινωνὸν χερνίβων) and stand 'close by the altar' (βωμοῦ πέλας), cruelly alluding to her plan to 'sacrifice' Agamemnon and Cassandra herself (cf. also *IA* 673–7).

793–6. We have lately cleansed ourselves etc.: Orestes avoids identifying himself with the worshipping group and putting himself under an obligation to Aegisthus. Taking water **from a flowing stream** guarantees its purity.

798. putting aside the spears etc.: thus they will be unable to intervene as Orestes attacks Aegisthus, and he will have time to appeal to them before they retaliate (844ff.).

799–802. the servants all put their hands etc.: all the verbs in this passage are in the imperfect tense as the eye-witness evokes the scene of preparations for the sacrifice; similarly 804, 809 (Aegisthus and Orestes praying) and 827, 839 (Aegisthus examining the entrails): »» Wackernagel 1926–8.I.181–4, Bakker 2010.163–6. The **blood-bowl** (σφαγεῖον) will be used to collect the blood from the victim's throat, some of it being scattered on the altar and the rest probably processed for human consumption (Ekroth 2005, esp. 14–19). The **baskets** (κανᾶ, sing. κανοῦν) contain the barley-grain and knife (803, 810f.) and other ritual items (van Straten 1995.31–43, 162–4). The **cauldrons** (λέβητες) are for boiling the animal's meat and are set on **braziers** to heat the water they contain (van Straten 147f.). **[set up cauldrons on braziers: ἀμφὶ... ἐσχάραις** does not mean 'around the altar'. For the meaning(s) of ἐσχάρα (basically 'fire-place', then 'fire-container') see LSJ *Rev.Supp.* 'ἐσχάρα', Chadwick 1996.111–5. For ἀμφί 'upon', presumably because the cauldrons cover or 'enclose' the braziers, see LSJ 'ἀμφί' B.I.2. Wecklein's change of L's accusative to dative is probably right.]

803. barley-grains (προχύται or οὐλαι) were thrown onto the altar fire and at the victim and perhaps the worshippers, like rice (or nowadays confetti) at a bride and groom (van Straten 1995.38f.).

804. strewing the altar etc.: the phrasing recalls Electra's description of Aegisthus pelting Agamemnon's tomb and taunting him with Orestes' helplessness (328f.). The contrast compounds the sacrilegious character of his prayer, and the irony of its being uttered just as Orestes is about to take his revenge.

805–8. Nymphs of the rocks: see 625–7 n., 774–80 n. **may I offer sacrifice often etc.:** the infinitive conveys the prayer, probably with δός understood, ('<grant> for me to offer...'): *SMT* §785. Aegisthus prays to continue enjoying the fruits of his crime while his enemies suffer, just as Sophocles' Clytemnestra prays to Apollo(!) for continued control of the Atreids' domain and confusion

to her enemies, euphemizing the latter because of Electra's presence (S. *El.* 634–59). Greek prayers of thanks and votive inscriptions often promised continued offerings to the god in return for continued blessings, e.g. Ar. *Thesm.* 950–2: »» Fraenkel 1962.118f., Versnel 1981.63f., van Straten 1981.66–74, Pulleyn 1997.203f.).

808–10. not voicing the words: in pagan antiquity prayers were normally spoken aloud but might be made silently for special reasons, e.g. *Iliad* 7.193–5 (Ajax suggests the Greeks might conceal their prayers from the Trojans), S. *El.* 637–43, 657–9 (Clytemnestra fears Electra's interference: see previous note). »» Versnel 1981.25–8, van der Horst 1994.1–9, Pulleyn 1997.184–8.

811–2. cut a hair from the calf etc.: the preliminary offering (ἀπαρχή) initiates and validates the killing (van Straten 1995.43f.). The **right hand** must be used because the left is ill-omened.

813–4. he cut the calf's throat etc.: cf. 800–2 n. Animals of all sizes could be lifted over the altar for the throat-cutting (van Straten 1995.104–13 with Fig. 115, *ThesCRA* I.116–8).

815–7. They say it's an accomplishment etc.: lit. 'they proclaim that one of the fine things for the Thessalians is this, whoever butchers…'. This fact turns up in the sophistic *Double Arguments* (Thessalians regard such work as fine (καλόν), whereas Sicilians think it base (αἰσχρόν) and leave it to slaves: *Dissoi Logoi* 2.11 DK). **καλὸς:** cf. 330–1 n.

820. his handsome cloak: ποριπάματα are 'pinnings', fastened at the shoulder with a large pin (πόρπη); the word is found only here and in *HF* 959 and *Rhes.* 442. For Orestes' clothing see 82–111 n.

822–6 he took the calf's foot etc.: the dead beast is laid on its back on a table and skinned before the entrails are extracted and examined and the carcass butchered. The entrails (heart, lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys) will be roasted over the fire for human consumption while the god's portion (thighbones wrapped in fat, sacrum and tail, gall-bladder) is burned in the fire making smoke for the god(s) to enjoy. The meat from the carcass will be boiled in cauldrons (800–2 n.). »» van Straten 1995.115–53 with Figs. 119–58; *ThesCRA* I.118–29. **[pulling it taut with his hand:** Musgrave's **χερί** gives a much more vivid picture than L's χέρα ('extending his hand').]

824–5. quicker than a runner completes two horse-track laps: each lap is longer than the ordinary *diaulos* of two stades or roughly 375 metres. In Pl. *Laws* 833b10 the *ephippios* race is intermediate between the *diaulos* and the long-distance *dolichos*. If the 'horse-track lap' was twice the ordinary *diaulos*, two laps would be around 1500 metres. Measuring time by distance came naturally in a world without chronometers. **[διήνυσεν** is a generalizing aorist used sometimes in epic comparisons (*SMT* §158; KG 1.161). Kovacs 1996.109 proposes διήνυσ' ἄν 'could have completed', comparing *Med.* 1181f., but the epicism is probably intentional.]

827–9. On the liver etc.: the liver was the primary organ for divination, and absence of the **lobe** a well known portent of disaster. The **portal vein** (carrying

blood into the liver) and the **gall-bladder** probably gave good or bad signs by variations in their appearance. »» Burkert 1985.112f., Pritchett 1980.74–8 (n. 118 defining the 'lobe' and n. 119 on this passage).

835. the innards: see 822–6 n.

837. a Phthian cleaver: the κοπίς was used for butchery: see Garvie on A. *Cho.* 859–62, where ἀνδροδαΐκτων κοπάνων 'manslaying cleaver(s)' refers to the sword Orestes will use against Aegisthus. **[ἀναρρήξω, so I may break open:** L's ἀπορρήξω would mean 'so I may break off'. Recent editors have accepted Wecklein's infinitive ἀναρρῆξαι ('for breaking open') but the subjunctive is idiomatic (Slings 1997.156f.).]

839–43. as he was leaning down etc.: Porter 1990.264–6 notes that the death-blow and victim's agonies are recalled in the description of Jason's impious murder of Apsyrtus in Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.468ff. **Aegisthus quaked and writhed:** in the Greek, asyndeton ('and' omitted) and rhyme (**ἤσπαιρεν ἠλέλιζεν**) heighten the emotional impact; similarly 855 **χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες**. In epic poetry ἀσπαίρω describes the death throes of both warriors and beasts. [L's ἠλάλαζεν ('cried *alalai*': cf. 854–5 n.) is quite out of place: see Denniston's extensive note. Most recent editors print **ἠλέλιζε...δυσθνῄσκων** with Aegisthus as the implied subject, probably rightly. L's δυσθνῄσκον (neuter) makes **πᾶν...σῶμα** the subject ('all his body quaked etc.') and is accepted by Denniston, but in poetry ἀσπαίρω almost always has a personal subject and it is Aegisthus (rather than his body) who is dying.]

846. in defiance: lit. 'with prows facing', a metaphor from warships meeting head on.

848. my own retainers: cf. 631 n.

853. an ancient man: phrased as in 287, but that old man has had no part in the attack on Aegisthus and is now busy diverting Clytemnestra.

854–5. they crowned your brother's head etc.: the imaging of Orestes as a returning victor, suggested in 590–5, 614, 675, is resumed: see below on 859–79, 880–5. **rejoicing and hallooing:** ἀλαλάζοντες describes the cry *alalai*, the male equivalent of women's ululation (690–2 n., Pulleyn 1997.181).

855–7. he is coming etc.: complicated syntax: **φέρων** is supplementary to **ἔρχεται** (cf. 494, 500) and **(ἐ)πιδείξων** expresses purpose. The sentence is often taken to mean that Orestes brings Aegisthus's severed head. This would suit the comparison of Orestes with Perseus (cf. 458–63 n., A. *Cho.* 812–4, 831–7) and would make Orestes seem grossly barbarous (cf. *HF* 939, Hom. *Il.* 11.136ff., 13.197ff. etc., Hdt. 3.79.1), but it is not what the Greek says and there is no mention elsewhere of a head (895–8 seems to refer to the whole of Aegisthus, as do 902, 959–61, 1276); the arrival and departure (959ff.) of Aegisthus in two parts would in fact be ludicrous. 'Not the Gorgon's head' was proverbial for a sight one need not fear (*Pho.* 455f., cf. *Or.* 1520f., *Alc.* 1118). The imaging of Orestes as Perseus remains effective and is *contrasted* with the negative imaging during Clytemnestra's murder (1221–3). »» Gellie 1981.11 n. 12, Kovacs

1987.139–41; Raeburn 2000.161–3 suggests the wording encourages a false expectation that Orestes will enter carrying Aegisthus's head.

858. *Exit Messenger*, presumably to rejoin Orestes' party; the actor will return as Clytemnestra. The 'conclusive reflection' in 857f., a common feature of report speeches, is enough to signal his departure. Minor characters often depart without further ado (Taplin 1977.88–91).

859–879. Third Stasimon (with response from Electra)

The pause is more marked than in 585–95. Formally this is, as Cerbo notes, an 'act-dividing lyric' covering the time-lapse between the Messenger's exit and Orestes' arrival with Aegisthus's corpse. A choral song interrupted by an actor's spoken response is however unusual and innovative (S. *Phil.* 827ff. includes a dactylic response by Neoptolemus; Electra's response might perhaps be chanted as a recitative with musical accompaniment (*parakatalogê*) as Cerbo suggests). The Chorus's metre is dactylo-epitrite (alternating dactylic and iambo-trochaic sequences: Dale 1971.80, Donzelli 1995.80f.), a metre often used in Pindar's and Bacchylides' songs for athletic victors. Vocabulary and imagery likewise evoke the victory celebration (*kômos*), especially the singing of the *kallinikos* refrain (864–5 n.) and the crowning of the victor (870–4), while the Chorus's vigorous dancing (859ff., 874f.) suggests the *hyporchema* (Carey 2012). Electra does not join in the dancing or the *kallinikos* song, but her responsiveness towards the Chorus is very different from her earlier refusal to join the festivities for Hera. All this celebration stands in ironic contrast with the realities of the situation: the gruesome murder of a defenceless man and the impending *peripeteia* which will transform Orestes' victory into matricide and remorse. Euripides evokes the *kallinikos* song to the same tragic effect in other plays, notably *HF* 180, 581f., 680f., 785–9 (cf. below on the adj. *nikêphoros* 'victorious', 872 n.). »» Easterling 1988. 104–7, Swift 2010.156–62, Cerbo 2012, Carey 2012.

860–1. leaping fawn-like etc.: for this image of girls' dancing cf. *Ba.* 866–76, Bacchyl. 13.84–90, Nisbet–Hubbard on Horace, *Odes* 1.23.1. Fawns 'dance' to Apollo's music, *Alc.* 583–7. **with festive joy:** ἀγλαΐα is the element of exuberant display in joyful music and dancing, often for athletic victories etc., e.g. *Hom. Hymn* 4.476, [Hes.] *Shield* 272, 285, Pind. *Pyth.* 1.2, fr. 148, Bacchyl. fr. 4.56; personified as a deity, Pind. *Ol.* 14.13, fr. 199.3, Bacchyl. 3.6.

862–4. Your brother has completed etc.: lit. 'Your brother completing wins (= has won) crown-bearing things (plural for singular) superior to those by Alpheus' streams (i.e. in the Olympic games)'. [In 862 three changes to L's text restore sense and metre. **στεφαναφόρα** is equivalent to στεφανηφόρον ἀγῶνα, a contest whose winner is entitled to wear a crown, cf. Hdt. 5.102.3, [Andoc.] 4.2. Some editors (e.g. Murray, Kovacs, Donzelli) retain L's στεφαναφορίαν

('a crown-wearing') and mark κρείσσω τοῖς as corrupt, but στεφαναφορίαν is slightly less apt and κρείσσω is unlikely to be corrupt or intrusive.]

864–5. Come, add the glorious victory-song: i.e. the refrain τήνελλα καλλίνικε hailing the victor as 'glorious in victory', traditionally attributed to Archilochus (Pind. *Ol.* 9.1–3 with scholia). [Recent editors have printed Blaydes' ὑπάειδε 'sing in accompaniment' (cf. Diggle 1981.39f.), but Cerbo 2012 n. 6 shows that L's **ἐπάειδε** 'sing as a refrain' is appropriate here, comparing the terminology of the Pindar scholia.]

866–8. O splendour etc.: for the Sun's **chariot-mounted blaze** see 466 n. Sun, Earth and Night were often grouped with Zeus in invocations of the elements (Denniston; cf. Barrett on *Hipp.* 601 and add *Med.* 1251). The invocation merges into the familiar 'light-for-darkness' metaphor expressing liberation from fear or repression (585–95 n.). Electra's earlier nocturnal isolation (54, 141, 181) is also recalled. **Night that filled my sight:** lit. ' Night that I looked'; for the internal accusative with verbs of vision see Wilamowitz or Bond on *HF* 563.

868. Now I am free etc.: lit. 'Now are my eye and (its) unfoldings free' *(hendiadys)*.

872. my victorious brother: νικηφόρου here and at 880 underlines the ironies around Orestes' 'victory' (see also 675 n.). Every instance of the word in Euripides connotes a disaster: Cassandra's 'marriage' with Agamemnon (*Tro.* 353, 460), Eteocles' combat with his brother (*Pho.* 781, 1368), Agave slaying her son (*Ba.* 1147, 1200), Iphigenia's sacrifice assuring victory at Troy (*IA* 1473, 1557); cf. S. *Trach.* 186 (Heracles returning from Oechalia to his death).

876–8. [Now shall the former dear kings etc.: L's reading, largely retained by Donzelli, is much less forceful: 'Now the dear kings who were previously ours shall rule the land, having justly cast down these unjust ones'.]

879. let us shout etc.: lit. 'let an aulos-joined shout go', a ritual instruction, e.g. *Phaethon* 101, Ar. *Birds* 857 (more examples in the commentaries of Diggle and Dunbar respectively). The aulos (cf. 435–7 n., 716–7 n.) typifies choral celebration, so **ξόναυλος** should probably be understood literally with **χαρᾷ** a modal dative (**joyfully**), rather than metaphorically ('in harmony with joy'): cf. Denniston, Cerbo 2012 n. 25.

880–1146. Fourth Episode. Electra with Aegisthus and Clytemnestra

880–906 Orestes welcomed as a victor, 907–56 Electra denounces Aegisthus, 957–87 Clytemnestra approaches, Orestes falters (dialogue of Orestes and Electra), 988–97 Clytemnestra greeted (choral anapaests), 998–1010 dialogue of Electra and Clytemnestra leading to their *agôn*: 1011–50 Clytemnestra's defence, 1051–9 transition, 1060–99 Electra's rebuttal, 1100–23 conclusion of the *agôn*, 1124–46 Clytemnestra lured into the house.

This sequence, one-fifth of the whole play, is its dramatic and dialectical core (cf. Introduction, pp. 1–3, 13). The shift from triumph over Aegisthus to the precipitation of the matricide is built around the three speeches, all focused on past wrongs. Interwoven with these is the action that will bring Orestes face to face with his mother. Orestes is prominent only in the crucial misgiving scene, and even there Electra dominates. The sequence gradually shifts emotional and moral sympathies. If the brutal killing of Aegisthus brought victory and liberation, Electra's gratuitous denunciation reveals the true extent of her obsessive hatred. This emerges more and more clearly in her confrontation with Clytemnestra, alienating sympathy from the matricide even though Clytemnestra is far from successful in justifying herself.

880–5. O glorious in victory etc.: cf. 864–5 n. Electra greets Orestes in terms appropriate for an athletic victor, lauding his victory and his father's earlier triumph, offering a victor's wreath, and describing his achievement (Swift 2010.161f.). **no idle furlong:** a 'six-plethron' or one-stade race (about 185 metres) was the shortest and most prestigious of the races at Olympia and elsewhere (cf. 824–5 n.). Orestes' achievement is enhanced by comparison with the pinnacle of athletic success (cf. 862–4), its darker implications still overlooked.

886. his comrade in arms: lit. 'next-shield-bearer'. Hoplites protected each other by maintaining a line of defensive shields.

886–7. a most loyal father: i.e. Strophius (18 n.); cf. 82–5 on Pylades' loyalty.

890–2. Put the gods first etc.: Orestes gives the gods credit and avoids the risk of arousing their envy *(phthonos*: 30 n., 902 n.), just as his father does on his return from Troy in *Agamemnon* 810–29 (see Fraenkel's extensive note on *Ag.* 811, and e.g. Hdt. 8.109.3 where Themistocles credits the gods and heroes with the defeat of the Persian invaders). He perhaps offers his garland to Apollo as he says this (Steidle 1968.83); otherwise he retains it throughout this scene, including his anguished exit. **as masters of this event:** ἀρχηγέτης, 'chief leader', was a title of Apollo and other gods as well as human rulers, magistrates etc. (LSJ with LSJ *Supp.*). **and of fortune's power:** τύχη is here a general force rather than the particular event as in 890. There is no strong disjunction between τύχη and the gods' will: cf. 610–1 n., 648, *Or.* 354f.

894–5. And so that I may add etc.: the text of this phrase has been doubted. Diggle 1977.117f. suggests deleting all of it, but see Donzelli 1991b.112. The main objection, that Orestes does not need to add a proof of what is already known for certain, is too precise: seeing the corpse will reinforce both Electra's certainty and her satisfaction. Orestes' words encourage this while also shifting the audience's attention to the corpse, which now becomes focal. He presumably gestures or leads Electra towards it as he speaks. If it is covered, he or an attendant uncovers it. [Articular infinitive-phrases in oblique cases such as **τὸ σάφ' εἰδέναι** are not very unusual in Euripides and Sophocles, e.g. A. *Ag.* 1349 τὸ γὰρ τοπάζειν τοῦ σαφ' εἰδέναι δίχα 'Guessing is different from knowing for certain'.]

896–8. set him out as prey etc.: nothing comes of these suggestions, but they re-emphasize the dehumanizing violence of Orestes' vengeance. Euripides' audience saw impalement as a barbarian practice, e.g. *IT* 1429f., Hdt. 9.79 (Hall 1989.158f. gives more examples and evidence of actual Persian practice). Aeschylus includes it amongst the vile punishments inflicted by the primitive Erinyes, *Eum.* 186–90. Exposure of the corpse was a more ambivalent matter. In the *Odyssey* Nestor says that Aegisthus's corpse ought to have been left to dogs and birds rather than decently buried as it was by Orestes (*Od.* 3.258–61), and Sophocles' Electra suggests the same (S. *El.* 1487–90). At Athens the bodies of executed criminals were thrown into a pit (*barathron*).

902. of abusing the dead: for disapproval of such abuse cf. *Odyssey* 22.412 (paraphrased by Archilochus fr. 134 *IEG*, Cratinus fr. 102 *PCG*). Electra's concern over the city's reaction recalls Clytemnestra's confrontation with the chorus in *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 1393ff.), which highlights the city's outrage at her behaviour. **lest someone strike me with envy:** for *phthonos* 'envy' or '(malevolent) resentment' see 30 n. For its 'striking' cf. A. *Ag.* 947 'may no eye's *phthonos* strike me from afar' (spoken by Agamemnon as he treads on the crimson cloths), 469f. 'a thunderbolt is hurled by the eyes of Zeus' (i.e. Zeus's *phthonos* strikes over-prosperous mortals), Pind. *Ol.* 8.55 'may *phthonos* not strike me with a rough stone'. Underlying is the idea of striking with the evil eye (see Fraenkel on *Ag.* 469f.). Electra refers to human rather than divine envy, but the one suggests the other ('divine *phthonos* is the projection of human *phthonos*', Denniston). [I see no need to suppose with Kovacs that some lines in which Electra explained her hesitation have been lost after 901. For 900 **εἰπεῖν to speak** cf. e.g. *Hcld.* 182, *Ba.* 775. »» Kovacs 1987.265–7, Donzelli 1991b.112 n. 37.]

905–6. our enmity...allows no truces: lit. 'we have joined enmity with him by truceless rules'. The principle of 'harming enemies' would have carried considerable weight with Euripides' audience: see Dover 1974.180–4, Blundell 1989.26–31, 50–9, and for Euripides Dodds on *Ba.* 877–81, Bond on *HF* 285, 585–6, 731–3. In *Choephori* 122f. the Chorus assures Electra that she is allowed to pray for her enemies' death. But abuse of a dead enemy was more ambivalent (Blundell 55f.).

907–56. *Electra's denunciation of Aegisthus.* Preface (907–13), crimes against Electra and her family (914–7), five insult topics (Clytemnestra's infidelity 918–24, their further corruption of each other 925–9, his subordination to her 930–7, his foolish attitude to wealth 938–44, his sexual hybris 945–51), conclusion (952–6). Most of these points are capped with sententious generalizations. The scenario and sexual insults owe something to Clytemnestra's insults over the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra, A. *Ag.* 1438–47. But this is a 'kakology', inverting the formal eulogy normally delivered at graveside or funeral feast (»» Garland 1985.39, Collard on *Supp.* 857–917). Such speeches, as opposed to women's laments, were properly given by men (»» Alexiou

1974.104–8), another norm inverted by Electra. Instead of achievements, reputation and virtues she singles out Aegisthus's crimes, humiliations and vices, predictably portraying him as both foolish and wicked (294–6 n.).

The speech is our main source of information about Aegisthus in this play, along with Electra's account in 319–31 and the Messenger's report. Most of her charges reflect his traditional personality (cowardice, adultery, effeminacy) or the typical traits of tyrants or usurpers such as Homer's suitors (sexual hybris, stupidity, false attitudes to wealth, social climbing). The rest (cuckoldry, subordination to a woman) are suggested by Aeschylus's picture of the unnaturally dominating and independent Clytemnestra. The whole attack is shaped by Electra's obsession with her own degradation and deprivations, and by the conventions of invective rhetoric. Her accusations may well be exaggerated (Aegisthus does not seem subservient in 22–35, 1109–17, 1138), but that does not mean that they are unfounded or fantastic.

Some editors think that parts of the speech are interpolations elaborating Euripides' rhetoric. Kovacs 1996.110–7 would delete more than half of it (916–24, 930–7, 941–51) and add a section that he thinks has been lost between lines 914 and 915. For a conservative approach, with which I generally agree, see Donzelli 1991b.107–13. See further below on 921–4, 932–7, 940–4.

907–8. what beginning shall I make etc.: a rhetorical opening stressing the wealth of the speaker's material or the magnitude of his task, e.g. *Odyssey* 9.14f., Gorgias *Palamedes* 4, Eur. *IA* 1124–6. As Denniston says, Electra can none the less be genuinely pondering her subject (in *IA* 1124–6 Clytemnestra is virtually soliloquizing). In the recognition scene of *Helen* Menelaus struggles to choose from the many things he has thought of saying to Helen during their absence (*Hel.* 630f.).

909. the twilight hours: the time of her pre-dawn laments, 112ff.

917. who commanded the Hellenes: see 1082 n. The contrast between the victorious and worthy commander and the non-combatant 'woman' Aegisthus (cowardly or unfit to fight) is traditional, cf. *Odyssey* 3.262–4, 310, A. *Ag.* 1625–7, 1634f., *Cho.* 302–5, S. *El.* 301f. Avoidance of military service (*astrateia*) was an indictable offence at Athens. Draft-dodgers are mocked in comedy as effeminate (Ar. *Clouds* 689–92, Eupolis's *Astrateutoi or Androgunai, 'Draft-dodgers or Women-men'*: »» Storey 2003.74–81). See also on 931.

919. she'd make you a decent wife: lit. 'you'd not have my mother bad towards you'. **[ἔξοις** (Paley, Kovacs) is a very likely correction of L's ἔξεις, the optative stressing that this was Aegisthus's foolish belief.]

921–4. A man should know etc.: lit. 'Whenever someone (τις), after corrupting someone's wife...is compelled to take her, let him know (ἴστω) he is a poor fool if he imagines...'. This is a variation on the formula ἴστω...ὅστις... 'Let whoever thinks...know...' (50–3, F 92, F 491). **did not keep:** the first **ἔχειν** is an 'imperfect' infinitive (*SMT* §119). The implication that Aegisthus was compelled to marry Clytemnestra (922) is far-fetched, but Electra is creating

her own account and this makes a good insult. There is no reason to delete these lines with Hartung and Kovacs (1996.110).

928–9. you took on each other's evil fortune: lit. 'the two of you took on, she your and you her evil fortune'. Each partner's viciousness made the other worse off. [L's reading does not quite make sense. I have made what I think is the most plausible correction.]

931. The man's his wife's etc.: ὁ ⟨ἀνὴρ⟩ τῆς γυναικός ⟨ἐστιν⟩ is easily understood. Normally the man took the woman from her parental household (*oikos*) and became her controller and protector (259 n.). Clytemnestra imported Aegisthus into 'her' (Agamemnon's) *oikos*. Such inversions would be notorious in real life (see Dover 1974.96–8) and were a topic for insults (cf. *Or.* 589, 742, Page on *Med.* 606) and for myth-making (Pembroke 1967).

932–7. This, though, is shameful etc.: the authenticity of these lines has been doubted, but 930–1 would be feeble without some such backing (there is no need to doubt those lines as well, as Kovacs proposes). From a real Electra we might expect more specific criticisms of the domestic arrangements and children of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, but generalized innuendo is an effective mode of abuse, and there is a further insult in reducing Aegisthus's career to this level. **known...not by their father's name:** this would be both unnatural and insulting. Denniston compares Eur. F 1064, Soph. *El.* 365 and F 564. Greek men were known by patronymics and at Athens were legally registered through their fathers in demes and phratries. The metronymic applied to a man would suggest illegitimacy (Masson 1975.221f.). An opposite system would be an aberration, as with the Lycians in Hdt. 1.173 (probably a fiction: Pembroke 1967.29). Women seem to have used metronymics as a matter of course (Skinner 1987). **if a man makes a notable marriage etc.:** lit. 'for one having married a notable and greater marriage <there is> no account of the man but of the females', another commonplace (cf. 1097–9 n. *Phaethon* 158f. with Diggle's note, F 214, F 502). A rich wife did have some leverage over a poorer husband in Athens since she would take her dowry with her if the marriage were dissolved. »» Lacey 1968.107–10.

939. on the strength of possessions: Agamemnon's possessions in fact, cf. 1086–90 n. Wealth and its excesses were proverbially linked with tyranny, cf. 314–7 n. and e.g. Solon fr. 33.5–6 *IEG*, S. *OT* 873ff., E. *Ion* 629–32.

940–4. It's nature that is secure etc.: several commonplaces are combined: *(a)* Wrongly acquired wealth is insecure (and god-approved wealth relatively secure), e.g. Hes. *Works* 320–6, Solon fr. 13.7–13 *IEG*, Theognis 197–202, Eur. F 354, 362.11–13, Pind. *Nem.* 8–17; *(b)* Wealth is naturally flighty and insecure (and depends on fortune and/or divine favour), e.g. *HF* 511f., *Pho.* 555–8, F 420.4f., 518.2, Menander *Dyscolus* 797ff., Alexis fr. 283 *PCG*; cf. West on *Or.* 340; *(c)* Virtue *(aretê)* is secure (whereas wealth is not), e.g. Solon fr. 15 *IEG* = Theognis 315–8; *(d)* Nature *(physis)* is secure (whereas fortune/*tychê* is not), e.g. Democritus B 176 DK; *(e)* Good breeding *(eugeneia)* is secure and a defence against misfortune, *Hcld.* 302–4, Isocr. 10.44. Electra's argument can

thus be paraphrased: 'Wealth is short-lived; nature (i.e. natural virtue), not money, is what lasts, standing by you and helping you resist misfortune, whereas the wealth of those who are obtuse and greedy enough to have grabbed it unjustly is soon gone (when their injustice brings misfortune on them).' The argument should not be disrupted by cuts, which put it out of proportion with the surrounding sections of the speech. [The apparent ascription of 943f. to *Phoenician Women* in Sextus Empiricus and Stobaeus (cited in the critical apparatus) is misleading since *Pho.* 558, which Sextus combines with *El.* 944, is itself an interpolation (see Mastronarde's commentary).]

945–6. As for your dealings etc.: **ἃ δ' ἐς** makes a rhetorical transition, cf. F 494.12, A. Ag. 830 (where Fraenkel cites prose examples; add [Dem.] 60.6). **I leave them unspoken** makes the point by pretending to pass over it (*praeteritio*): cf. 1245f.

947. You abused them: sexual abuses were associated with hybristic or tyrannical behaviour, e.g. *Odyssey* 22.37 (the Suitors), A. Ag. 1438 (Clytemnestra accusing Agamemnon), E. *Erechtheus* F 362.24–7, *Supp.* 452–4 with Collard's note; cf. Xen. *Hiero* 1.27ff.

949. girlish looks: effeminacy and feminine attractiveness are typical of adulterers such as Aegisthus, Paris (e.g. *Iliad* 3.54f.), and perhaps Aegisthus's father Thyestes (Fraenkel on A. Ag. 1625ff.). Cf. *RAC* IV 'Effeminatus', cols. 628f., 644f.

950–1. His offspring hold to Ares etc.: warfare, not dancing, is where real men excel, cf. *Iliad* 3.392–4 (Paris again), 15.508, 24.260f., *Odyssey* 8.246–9, Eur. F 15–16, F 360.25–7, F 1052.1f. »» *RAC* IV.638–40, Dickie 1983.256f., 267f., 1985.169–75.

952–3. still ignorant etc.: 'knowing nothing of what, found out by time, you have paid the penalty for': a summary of the obtuseness Electra has criticized throughout the speech. Aegisthus has died none the wiser, like all those fools who multiply their crimes without foreseeing that they will face justice in the end (cf. *HF* 774–80, F 227.57f., F 255, F 564, A. *Eum.* 550–7, S. *OT* 873–8). **time has found you out:** **χρόνῳ** could mean 'in time', 'in the end', but the personification is more pointed and has ample precedent, e.g. *Ba.* 888–90, F 222, F 303, F 912b, F 979; de Romilly 1968 ch. 2. [The sense is weakened by changing L's **ὢν** to ὡς (Bothe, Denniston: 'not knowing at all that...') or σῶν (Radermacher, Kovacs: 'knowing nothing sound').]

953–6. criminals: a technical sense, see LSJ 'κακοῦργος' I.2, Kells 1966.52. The criminal runs his life's race with Justice in pursuit and always likely to catch him before the finish (or else to catch his descendants, e.g. Solon fr. 13.29–32 *IEG*). We have moved from Time to the even commoner personification of Justice (goddess and daughter of Zeus already in Hes. *Theog.* 902, *Works* 220–4, 256–62); but the image of a foot-race with Justice is novel. **the first leg:** **βῆμα** is normally a 'step', but even a very stupid wrongdoer would hardly sense victory after one step. **completes his life's course:** lit. 'rounds the end of life', cf. 659 n.

959–87. *Clytemnestra's approach.* Aegisthus is written off, and the murder of Clytemnestra comes suddenly into focus. The implications of matricide are raised for the first time, not simply to show the difficulty of Orestes' deed and prepare for his persecution by the Erinyes (as in *Choephori*), but in such a way that this short scene marks a moral and emotional revolution *(peripeteia)* in the play. The stichomythia brilliantly portrays the onset of awareness in Orestes by contrasting it with Electra's relentless demand for vengeance. In 969–80 she caps his objections to killing their mother with demands to avenge their father, showing the ruthlessness and disputatious skill of Aeschylus's Clytemnestra overruling Agamemnon (*Ag.* 931–43) or his Orestes overruling Clytemnestra (*Cho.* 908–30, a scene constantly recalled here even though there is no mother–son confrontation). Her final onslaught clinches his reluctant action (985–7), leaving the audience to wonder whether he was compelled by her arguments or her ferocity, whether he might still change his mind, and how Electra herself will deal with Clytemnestra. »» Schwinge 1968. 85–100, Gallagher 2003.408–10 (sophistic features of Electra's arguments).

959–66. L assigns 959–61 to Orestes, then 962–6 (and beyond) to Electra and Orestes alternately. But this makes Orestes almost simultaneously voice satisfaction at his mother's arrival (965) and agitation at the prospect of killing her (967). Moreover, Electra's comment on Orestes' catching sight of his mother (968) suggests that it is he, not she, who has noticed and described Clytemnestra's approach (962, 964, 966). These are the main reasons for accepting Camper's reversal of L's assignments, although this creates a difficulty in 965–7 (see below). [Some scholars retain L's assignments, e.g. Steidle 1968.74–6, Donzelli 1991a.18–20, Slings 1997.158f. Others retain them while placing 966 (Orestes) before 965 (Electra), e.g. Kirchhoff in his 1855 edition, Schwinge 1968.85–90, Kovacs 1984.239, Lloyd 1986.17f. — but 965 looks like a response (**ἄρα**) to 964, and 966 like an addition to 965 (**καὶ μήν...γε** as e.g. *Hipp.* 589, 862 (see Barrett's note), A. *Ag.* 1188, *Cho.* 205; cf. *GP* 120, 356).]

959–61. Well, then: servants etc.: this could be an intervention by Orestes, who has been in charge of the corpse, the servants, and the scene so far; but it is not surprising if Electra takes over at this point, given her character and the fact that she has devised the plot to trap Clytemnestra. The ruthless tone here and in 965 is more characteristic of her (cf. 281), even if Orestes has previously contemplated matricide cheerfully enough (600, 614, 646; at A. *Cho.* 904 he speaks harshly of 'slaughter' to Clytemnestra's face). There may be some sarcasm in the allusion to sacrificial slaughter, as those attending sacrifices avoided corpses for the sake of purity (Parker 1983.33–41).

962. here's something else etc.: lit. 'Let's launch into another subject'.

963. from Mycenae: see 4–7 n. [L's ὁρῶ is retained by Donzelli but gives an absurd sequence: 'Hold on, here's something else...' — 'Surely I don't see reinforcements...' — 'No, you see my mother...']

964. the mother who gave me birth: foreshadowing Orestes' crucial question in 969. [Those who give this line to Electra argue that it reflects her bitter

relationship with her mother, and that Orestes could hardly recognize Clytemnestra when he has not seen her since infancy. But he knows she is coming, and a woman approaching in royal style can hardly be anyone else.]

965. nicely, καλῶς: see 330–1 n. **right into the net:** lit. 'into mid-net'. For the metaphor cf. e.g. *Med.* 1277, *HF* 729, Stevens on *Andr.* 995; and on hunting nets Xen. *Cyn.* 2.6 and 2.10.

966. [And look etc.: if Electra speaks 965 and Orestes 967 (as he must), assignment of 966 is problematic. Some editors (e.g. Camper, Murray, Denniston) give 965–6 together to Electra, but an interruption of the stichomythia at this point is unlikely. Others suppose that a line of Orestes has been lost after 965 and give 966 to Electra (Kirchhoff 1867, Diggle), or that Orestes speaks 966 and a line of Electra is missing after it (Nauck). I prefer the last of these alternatives. The comment on Clytemnestra's luxury would admittedly be characteristic of Electra, but she may have made such a comment in a following (lost) line. One might also consider assigning 966–7 together to Orestes: the interruption of the stichomythia at this point would highlight his sudden hesitation, in much the same way as 573–4 highlight the Old Man's announcement of the scar.]

967. What, then, shall we do etc.: in *Choephori* Clytemnestra has bared her breast and Orestes asks, 'Pylades, what shall I do? Should I feel compunction *(aidôs)* at killing my mother?' (*Cho.* 899). In both lines 'mother' is placed with great impact (this tells strongly against punctuating after **μητέρ(α)**: 'What shall we do to our mother?'). There are subtle differences from Aeschylus: 'we' rather than 'I', a question slanted against killing rather than relenting. The contrast is additionally striking if Pylades has stayed on stage (rather going into the cottage with the servants and Aegisthus's corpse a few lines earlier) and now remains silent while Electra speaks in his place.

968. You don't mean pity has seized you etc.: a harsh question. Electra ascribes Orestes' hesitation to pity (*oiktos*, the 'weakness' of sensitive men that he commented on earlier, 294–6) rather than to *aidôs* as he himself does in *Choephori*. She insists on retribution (970, 982–4), whereas Pylades' first and only answer reminded Orestes of Apollo's will (*Cho.* 900–2). In Greek eyes pity was rightly felt only for someone suffering undeservedly (»» Konstan 2006.201–18), and Electra refuses to allow that her mother's death will be undeserved.

969. who nurtured me and bore me: the phrasing inverts the natural order (birth, then nurture) in the figure known as *hysteron proteron*, 'latter first': cf. *Supp.* 918 δυστυχῆ σ' ἔτρεφον, ἔφερον... 'ill-fortuned did I nurture you, carry you...', S. *OT* 827 Πόλυβον, ὃς ἐξέθρεψε κἀξέφυσέ με 'Polybus, who raised me and begot me' (highlighting Oedipus's disastrous inference that Polybus, who raised him, must have been his biological father). Here the inversion creates a direct echo of Clytemnestra's desperate plea as she exposes her breast to Orestes in A. *Cho.* 908 (ἐγώ σ' ἔθρεψα... 'I nurtured you...', cf. also *Cho.* 928) and implicitly contradicts Apollo's assertion in *Eumenides* that the mother is only the nurturer (*trophos*) of the child and not its begetter (*tokeus*: *Eum.*

658–61). There is also a reminiscence of Telemachus's refusal to drive out Penelope 'who bore me, who nurtured me' (ἥ μ' ἔτεχ', ἥ μ' ἔθρεψε), *Od.* 2.131. *Hysteron proteron* phrasing occurs often and naturally in Homeric epic (e.g. *Od.* 12.134 θρέψασα τεκοῦσά τε) but was used artfully as a figure of speech by the tragedians. »» Battezzato 2008.7f., 13–51.

971–2. O Phoebus etc.: Orestes' realization puts into a new light his earlier allusions to Apollo's guidance (87, 399f.) and his remarks about pity *(oiktos)*, ill-bred ignorance *(amathia)* and discernment *(sophia*: see 294–6 n.). His insight, repeated in 981 and confirmed by Castor (1244–6, 1302), recurs in other plays of Euripides where Orestes and others criticize Apollo's guidance: *IT* 711–5 (cf. 570–1), *Or.* 28–31, 160–5, 191–4, 416f., 590–5, *Andr.* 1029–36. Divine vindictiveness is said to lack *sophia* in *Andr.* 1161–5 (Apollo's punishment of Neoptolemus), *Hipp.* 120 (Aphrodite's hostility to Hippolytus). The gods' unwisdom in making life difficult for mortals is a topic in Greek poetry as early as the *Iliad* but is challenged more sharply in these tragic contexts (»» Pulleyn 1997.196–207). On Apollo's responsibility for the matricide see Introduction, pp. 3, 11–12. **where Apollo is foolish etc.: σκαιός** is a synonym for ἀμαθής, and *skaiotês* is here contrasted with *sophia* as *amathia* is in 294f. (cf. *Med.* 190, 298, *Hcld.* 458, *HF* 229f., F 290, F 657.2).

973. You bade me kill...whom I should not kill: the paradox is pointed by the verbal parallel *(paronomasia)* **ἔχρησας...οὐ χρῆν** (lit. 'whom it was wrong for me to kill'). Again compare Orestes' confidence in *Choephori* 930: 'You killed whom you should not have (ὃν οὐ χρῆν), now suffer what you should not (τὸ μὴ χρεών, i.e. what no mother should suffer).

975. I'll be exiled: lit. 'I'll flee'. This could mean 'I'll be pursued' e.g. by the Erinyes, or 'I'll go on trial' as a marginal note in L suggests, but the question of retribution comes in the next couplet, and Orestes has not yet heard that he is to face the novel procedure of a trial (1250–72, 1316–20). In the epic world kin-murder normally leads to exile. 'Now' and 'before' refer to his new exile and the long but guiltless exile from which he has only just returned. (I differ from Denniston on all of this.)

976. But impious too: towards both Agamemnon and Apollo.

977–8. And shall not I pay my mother etc.: recalling A. *Cho.* 924f.: (*Cl.*) 'Look out, beware your mother's wrathful hounds (i.e. Erinyes)' — (*Or.*) 'But if I renounce this how shall I escape my father's?' The punishment for failing to avenge his father is vividly described in A. *Cho.* 269–97, where Orestes quotes Apollo's own oracular threats (he alludes to these in 979). [In 978 **τί δ' ἢν 'But what if...'** is colloquial (Stevens 1976.30f., Diggle 1974.17 n. 62). In 977 L's ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὸς τοῦ φόνου etc. makes sense only as a bland statement, 'But I shall pay the penalty for my mother's murder' (so Wecklein and others). Herwerden followed by Denniston and recent editors gives 'I know it (ἐγῷδα), but shall I not pay etc.', a rather drastic adjustment. Curnis shows that the dative **μητρὶ** (written in two copies of L, presumably by conjecture) is idiomatic and apt in this context, comparing 260, 676, 1146, S. *El.* 33f.; for the phrasing see

also *Andr.* 51f. 1106f., *Ion* 444–6, *Or.* 1597, 1648–50, S. *El.* 537f. Cumis retains τοῦ φόνου, but **γ' οὐ** makes the response to 976 more pointed. »» Denniston on 977–8 (for older conjectures), Cumis 2005; Distilo reaches the same conclusion as me.]

979–81. Perhaps an avenging demon etc.: *alastores* 'are supernatural powers, sometimes incarnate, associated with calamity, usually punitive and effecting the downfall of a House...' (Willink on *Or.* 337 with refs). The idea that an *alastor* might be destroying the house of Atreus because of its earlier crimes is important in Aeschylus's trilogy, esp. *Ag.* 1497ff. Castor will reveal that Orestes' guess is wrong, although Apollo's own policy has been destructive. Orestes recalls the guess ruefully at *Or.* 1668f., after Apollo has intervened to restore his fortunes. **Sitting on the sacred tripod:** in practice the Pythia sat on the tripod to give prophecies, but Apollo could be thought of as the occupant (e.g. *IT* 976, *Or.* 956) and the Pythia's voice as Apollo's (e.g. 1302). Electra's point is that Apollo would never allow an *alastor* to usurp the tripod. **well prophesied:** the impersonal phrasing avoids a direct accusation of Apollo and allows for (say) a mistake in the delivery of the oracle. [L (corrected in P) gives all these lines to Orestes: 'Perhaps an avenging demon took the god's form and made the utterance seated on the sacred tripod? I do not think, nor (οὐδὲ) can I believe, that this has been well prophesied.' An exchange between Orestes and Electra is much more compelling, and Hermann's οὐ τἂν (= οὔ τοι ἄν) more forceful than P's οὐκ ἄν.]

982–4. Won't you stop falling etc.: for the syntax see 383–5 n. **the very same trap:** Orestes must use guile (**δόλον**) against Clytemnestra in just retaliation for her treacherous use of guile against Agamemnon: cf. A. *Cho.* 556 (*Or.* 'so that, having killed a noble man by guile, they may also be caught by guile, dying in the same net, as Loxias decreed') and 888 (*Cl.* 'We are to die then as we killed, through guile'). The motif is well established in our play (see 8–10 n., 87–9 n.). Electra continues to use Apollo's authority to reinforce her own vengefulness.

[L's allocation of these lines (with Matthiae's ἦ in 983 and Triclinius's καθεῖλες 'you killed' in 984) gives *El.* 'Will you not cease this unmanly fall into cowardice?', *Or.* 'But shall I really lay the same trap against her?', *El.* '(Yes, the trap) with which you killed her husband, killing Aegisthus'. Donzelli surprisingly retains this (cf. Donzelli 1991a.22–4). The ambiguity of **πόσιν** 'husband' has surely caused confusion. †***killing Aegisthus***† may simply be a misguided attempt at clarification, but if Aegisthus was named the sense may have been 'with Aegisthus' (Wilamowitz) or 'for Aegisthus's sake/as a favour to Aegisthus' (Cropp, cf. 61, 984).]

985. I'm starting on a dreadful progress: προβήματος echoes **ἔσειμι I'll go inside**, suggesting that Orestes is entering forbidden territory. [The noun πρόβημα is found only in Ar. *Wealth* 759 (= Eur. F dub. 1128b), but the verb προβαίνω 'proceed, go on' is found seven times in Euripides; note *Hipp.* 503f. ἃ μή...πέρα προβῇς τῶνδ(ε) 'Ah, go no further than that', *Or.* 511 πέρας δὴ

ποῖ κακῶν προβήσεται 'Where will the borderline of evils advance to' (Tyndareus condemning Orestes' retaliation against his mother). Denniston corrected L's προβλήματος, a word which in 5th-century texts means 'protective equipment' or 'obstacle' (hence 'problem' in later philosophical parlance). West's connection of προβλήματος with προβάλλεσθαι with reference to the initiation of a sacrifice is far-fetched (West 1980.14).]

987. bitter, not sweet: a weak expression but more appropriate than the manuscripts' 'bitter and sweet'. This is not a moment of pleasure balanced with pain as in Sappho fr. 130 LP, S. *Ant.* 436, E. *Hel.* 654, *IT* 832, *Or.* 356.

988–97. *Clytemnestra welcomed.* An honorific address in anapaests (⏑ ⏑ – etc.), as often in choral announcements. This welcome is like those given to royal persons arriving by chariot or carriage in A. *Pers.* 150–8 (the Persian queen: anapaests and tetrameter address), *Ag.* 783–809 (Agamemnon returning: cf. the honorific formulae addressed to Clytemnestra, *Ag.* 258–63), Eur. *IA* 590–7 (Clytemnestra and Iphigenia arriving at Aulis), and *Rhes.* 379–87 (the barbarian king Rhesus arriving at Troy). In *Tro.* 568–76 the princess Andromache arrives pathetically as a slave on Neoptolemus's chariot. Euripides' chariot entries seem to have revived a convention of earlier tragedy (Taplin 1977.76–9). The Athenian theatre easily allowed the entrance of a mule-drawn wagon. Clytemnestra and her women are richly attired (315–8, 967, 1140) and have male attendants (1133–8 n.). I tentatively assign this arrival to eisodos B (cf. Introduction, p. 17), but Said 1993.181 may be right in suggesting that Clytemnestra should come from the direction opposite to that leading to Aegisthus's property.

The address includes conventional praise elements: Clytemnestra's royal status, her lineage, her divine connections and similarity to the gods, the Chorus's reverence, her wealth and good fortune, and the appropriateness of their greeting. All this is heavily ironic as she is about to be killed and the Chorus is conspiring with her killers. Their words hint at, or even invite, the gods' envy (*phthonos*) towards excessive human prosperity and lavish displays of it. Clytemnestra is cast as an oriental monarch like the queen in *Persians*, just as she herself praises Agamemnon like an oriental king and lures him into behaving like one as he goes to his death in *Agamemnon* 895–972. »» Lloyd 1992.60f.

990–3. sister of Zeus's sons etc.: the Dioscuri are praised as sons of Zeus and protectors of sailors in *Homeric Hymn* 33: see 1233–7 n. on their characteristics and relevance within the play. **the noble twins: ἀγαθοῖν** includes both their high birth and valour and their benevolence to mortals as ἀγαθοὶ δαίμονες ('good spirits'). **who dwell in the fiery heaven:** cf. 1349, *Or.* 1636, 1683–90, *IA* 768, *Hom. Hymn* 33.13. They are identified with the two major stars in the constellation Gemini ('Twins'). The idea that the gods dwell in the *aithêr* (the highest stratum of the universe) is found as early as *Iliad* 2.412. The *aithêr* is 'fiery' because it contains the fiery sun and stars (the idea that it *consisted* of

fire is not securely attested in fifth-century thought: Egli 117ff.). In Euripides' time *aithêr* (or *aêr*/'air' according to Diogenes of Apollonia) could be seen as the substance of divinity, life and consciousness, and as a controlling power identifiable with Zeus (cf. *Tro.* 884–7). »» Guthrie 1969.231–4, Egli 2003.79–94, 117–20. **protecting mortals:** σωτήρ ('protector', 'saviour') was a title of many deities and a standard epithet of the Dioscuri (e.g. *Hom. Hymn* 33.6). It began to be applied to human rulers in the 5th century. »» LSJ 'σωτήρ', 'σώτειρα'.

995. great wealth and prosperity: μεγάλης belongs 'in common' with both nouns (cf. 162–3 n.).

996–7. it is proper that your fortunes receive attention: more irony in the continued flattery, and perhaps a veiled hint that Clytemnestra is in danger (θεραπεύεσθαι could be taken as middle, 'That you attend to your fortunes'). [The last line should be a paroemiac (– – – – ⏑ ⏑ – –), e.g. '<Hail> O queen' (Nauck), 'O <mistress> queen' (Diggle).]

998–1123. *The agôn.* An *agôn logôn* ('verbal contest') is framed and linked by brief dialogues. Such debates occur in most of the extant tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, reflecting the development of rhetoric in Athenian assemblies and lawcourts and of rhetorical training in Athenian education (a surviving academic example is Antisthenes frs. 14–15 Caizzi, Ajax and Odysseus debating their claims to the arms of Achilles). The debates vary in manner and impact. Here the model is a lawcourt trial, but the artificiality of the situation is evident even when compared with the informal trial scenes of (e.g.) *Hecuba* (1109ff.) or *Trojan Women* (895ff.), let alone the formal but idealized trial in Aeschylus's *Eumenides* (566ff.). There is no presiding figure and no decision to be reached since Clytemnestra is already doomed to die. She is the 'defendant' but speaks first, largely because her guilt is taken for granted (she herself admits to having 'gone too far', 1109f.). The issue dramatized is not guilt but the response to guilt; condemnation of Clytemnestra is tempered by the extenuations she offers, her regrets, and her unwitting defencelessness, approval of Electra by her gloating vengefulness. As often in Euripides, the *agôn* highlights the possibilities of alternative judgements and conflicting points of view, reflecting sophistic modes of analysis and reinforcing the provocative and questioning tone of the whole play. The treatment of Clytemnestra foreshadows Euripides' later exploration of the tragic origins of her crime in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (cf. 1020–2 n.). »» (the tragic *agôn* in general) Lloyd 1992.1–36, Barker 2009.267–75, Mastronarde 2010.222–45, Rutherford 2012. 190–200; (the *agôn* in *Electra*) Donzelli 1978.168–78, Goebel 1983.341–7, Lloyd 1992.55–70, Dubischar 2001.322–33, Gärtner 2005.15–23.

The scene has much in common with the *agôn* in Sophocles' *Electra* (see throughout the notes below). The arguments are differently deployed, but the substantial differences are that Euripides' Clytemnestra discusses Cassandra (and Electra fails to answer) while Sophocles' Electra claims that the sacrifice of Iphigenia was unavoidable after Agamemnon had unwittingly offended Artemis

(S. *El.* 563–76; Euripides' Electra offers no such justification). The scenes are similarly shaped (Clytemnestra enters and abruptly initiates a debate over her guilt) but their settings are different: Sophocles' scene comes earlier in the play while Aegisthus is still alive and Electra does not know that Orestes has returned; the debate is therefore less of a charade. These points have suggested to some that Euripides wrote with Sophocles' scene in mind, refining its effect by pitting a strong Electra against a weak Clytemnestra (e.g. Vahlen 1891, Vögler 1967.179–86; Lloyd 1992.62f., 65 treats such inferences sceptically. Cf. Introduction, pp. 26f.).

In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra confronts the Chorus immediately after killing her husband, proclaiming her success and her joy at striking him down. In an increasingly emotional lyric exchange (*Ag.* 1407–1576) the elders lament their king and condemn the damage she has done to the city. Clytemnestra returns again and again to the killing of Iphigenia while pointing also to Agamemnon's adultery with Cassandra and justifying her alliance with Aegisthus, but gradually she is compelled to recognize that what she has done is part of the family's history of self-destruction, and that she in turn will face justice. Euripides' and Sophocles' scenes echo Clytemnestra's defences in the Aeschylean scene but reshape it as a personal confrontation between mother and daughter and focusing on the impact of Clytemnestra's crime within her family. »» Foley 2001.201–42.

998–1010. *Opening dialogue.* A tone of hostility and mutual recrimination is set. Neither greets the other, Electra is acknowledged curtly in 1007, and in her reply **mother** (1006) is sarcastic. Clytemnestra is defensive, Electra correspondingly aggressive.

998–9. Get down from the wagon etc.: Clytemnestra's words echo her commands to Agamemnon and the captive Cassandra in *Agamemnon* (ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, *Ag.* 906, 1039), heightening the dramatic irony here.

1000–3. The houses of the gods etc.: Clytemnestra's comparison of her own honours with those of the gods seems to compound the effect of the Chorus's greeting. She is hardly justified in enjoying the spoils of Troy at all (cf. 1086–90 n.).

1004–6. seeing that I am a slave: Electra complains of being enslaved in her own house in A. *Cho.* 135, S. *El.* 813–5, 1190–2. **your divinely blessed hand:** again sarcastic and menacing.

1010. [ὀρφανοὶ λελειμμένοι, bereft (lit. 'left orphaned'): L's feminine endings are corrected because masculine endings are used in tragedy by female subjects referring to themselves in the plural, e.g. *Ion* 955, 1362 (»» KG 1.83, Wackernagel 1926–8.I.98–100). Electra is surely referring to herself, not to Clytemnestra's slave women.]

1011–50. *Clytemnestra's defence.* 1011–7 Introduction, 1018–29 Iphigenia (narrative and argument), 1030–40 Cassandra (narrative and argument), 1041–5

Iphigenia (further argument), 1046–50 Conclusion: 'I had to kill him, and I had to use Aegisthus's help'. The speech is designed to make the most of a weak case. Clytemnestra claims that the sacrifice of Iphigenia justified her killing Agamemnon (this is her entire case in S. *El.* 525–51), but that she would not have done so without the added provocation of Cassandra. But she cannot afford to concede that jealousy over a concubine caused her to murder the king of Argos, so she only argues that Cassandra precipitated and justified her adultery (1035–40). She then returns to her strongest point, the sacrifice, arguing ingeniously that Agamemnon would have killed her if his brother Menelaus had been abducted and she had sacrificed their son Orestes in order to retrieve him (1041–5). Her conclusion, that she needed Aegisthus's help to kill Agamemnon, glosses over their adultery and obscures its timing: did it begin with Cassandra (1036–8, unspecific) or with Iphigenia (1046–8)? [This design is spoiled if 1030–40 or 1041–5 are deleted, or 1041–5 placed before 1030 so as to combine the arguments about Iphigenia, as some editors have proposed. »» Denniston on 1030–48, Vahlen 1891.358–60, Goebel 1983. 342f., Lloyd 1992.63–5.]

1012–3. that is what your father brought about etc.: lit. 'such plans did your father plan against those of his dear ones against whom it was least proper (for him to plot)'.

1013–7. Mind you, when bad repute etc.: an attempt to gain sympathy (*captatio benevolentiae*) by complaining of prejudice against her, like Andromache in *Andr.* 186–91, Medea in *Med.* 292–305, Helen in *Tro.* 914–7. Her concern for public opinion (cf. 30 n.) is a far cry from the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's disdain for it (e.g. *Ag.* 1401–6). **καίτοι** introduces a reservation which discourages the speaker from proceeding but is overcome by the consideration in 1015–7: cf. *GP* 557 (iii), Ar. *Ach.* 368–9. **people tend to find her speaking offensive:** lit. 'there is some bitterness in her tongue'. For **γλώσσῃ** 'speaking/ talk' see LSJ 'γλῶσσα' I.2 at end, and for πικρότης 'bitterness/ offensiveness' e.g. 418, 638, 858, 987. For the phrasing cf. e.g. *Hel.* 1056 παλαιότης γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ γ' ἔνεστί τις 'there is a certain antiqueness in the story', *Ba.* 269 ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ' οὐκ ἔνεισί σοι φρένες 'there is no intelligence in what you say'. **They should learn the facts:** a defendant's insistence on πρᾶγμα/ἔργον/'facts' against γλῶσσα/λόγοι/'talk', e.g. *Hec.* 1187f., *Hipp.* 983–5, F 206, Soph. F 201a, Ar. *Wealth* 376. **if hate is called for:** lit. 'if hating holds appropriately': for **ἀξίως ἔχῃ** = ἄξιόν ἐστι see LSJ 'ἔχω' B.II.2. »» (text and language) Cropp 1982.52–4, Kovacs 1996.118f.

1018–9. When Tyndareus gave me etc.: Clytemnestra stresses her maternal bond with Iphigenia and Agamemnon's betrayal of her in A. *Cho.* 1412–21, 1523–9, S. *El.* 530–8. [δέ in ἡμᾶς δ' ἔδωκε marks the transition from the introduction to the substance of the speech (*GP* 170–1).]

1020–2. Yet that man lured my child etc.: the sacrifice of Iphigenia was prescribed by Calchas to appease Artemis (following some offence against her by Agamemnon) and so to calm the winds hindering the departure of the Greek

fleet from Aulis. Her luring to Aulis on the pretext of marriage with Achilles was related in the lost epic *Cypria,* alluded to in *Agamemnon* 226–48 (see Armstrong–Ratchford 1985, esp. 6–8), and is exploited by Euripides here, at *Iphigenia in Tauris* 15–25 etc., and above all in the plot of *Iphigenia at Aulis* (with the striking development that Clytemnestra herself brings her daughter to Aulis). »» Jouan 1966.259–98, Gantz 1993.582–8. **the moorings at Aulis:** lit. 'stern-holding Aulis', the ships being moored from the stern; perhaps also alluding to the delay that led to the sacrifice. The adj. πρυμνοῦχος seems to have been invented by Euripides for this context. It reappears only once in a late epigram, *Anth. Pal.* 7.374.6.

1022–4. he held her stretched above the altar: so that her blood poured onto it, cf. 800–2 n. **and slashed through Iphigenia's pale white throat:** emphasizing her youth and contrasting the red blood, cf. *Supp.* 76f., *Or.* 961f., *Hel.* 1089, A. *Cho.* 24f. παρηίς is normally 'cheek'; the synecdoche compounds the emotive effect (Kells 1966.53f.).

1024–6. Now if he had been relieving (lit. 'curing') **the city etc.:** a 'hypothetical syllogism', posing a condition which would support the opponent's case and whose non-fulfilment undermines it (Lloyd 1992.33). In several myths the sacrifice of a child or children is nobly accepted, including those treated by Euripides in *Children of Heracles* (the eldest daughter dies to save her family), *Erechtheus* (the king's daughter dies to save Athens from a barbarian attack) and *Phoenician Women* (Creon's son Menoeceus dies to save Thebes from the Seven). The second of these was important in Athenian ideology: see especially the speech of queen Praxithea justifying her daughter's sacrifice, F 360. Whether such stories reflect real human sacrifices in historic or prehistoric Greece is unclear (»» Hughes 1991, Bonnechere 1994). **or meaning to profit his house etc.:** Praxithea assures Erechtheus that their daughter 'will earn a single crown for herself alone and will save her mother and you, and her two sisters' (F 360.34–7: her expectations are however dashed when the sisters sacrifice themselves as well and Erechtheus dies in the battle).

1027–9. since Helen was full of lust etc.: cf. 213–4 n. Menelaus's insistence on having Iphigenia killed to retrieve the worthless Helen is blamed also at *Andr.* 624–6, *Tro.* 370–2, and at the beginning of *Iphigenia at Aulis* (where his dramatic change of heart comes too late to save her). He is often denigrated in Athenian tragedy (e.g. S. *Aj.* 1046–1162, E. *Andr.* 309–765), partly at least because of his association with Sparta.

1032–4. he came back with a raving, god-possessed girl: Cassandra, a daughter of Priam and prophetess of Apollo, was brought by Agamemnon to Argos as a concubine. Clytemnestra is already her killer in *Odyssey* 11.421–3 and in a mid-7th-century bronze strip (Prag G1, Pl. 37a), our only representation from the archaic period (for the only fifth-century representation see 1213–7 n.). She appears memorably in *Agamemnon* 1035–1330 and *Trojan Women* 308–461. Aeschylus's Clytemnestra (but not Sophocles') uses her as additional justification for killing Agamemnon, *Ag.* 1440–7. **and tried to keep two brides to-**

gether: a threat to Clytemnestra emotionally as to Deianeira on Iole's arrival in Sophocles *Women of Trachis* (531ff.). A second wife or concubine is typically seen as a threat to the first wife's children and their inheritance, e.g. in *Medea*, *Andromache*, *Ino*, and the *Phrixus* plays, but that is hardly the case for Clytemnestra. [L's κατείχομεν would mean 'we were arriving' (LSJ 'κατέχω' B.2), not 'we were staying' as Denniston suggests. For **δμοῦ** cf. 784 n.]

1035. women are a foolish lot: μῶρον includes sexual weakness, attributed to women along with inferior intelligence by Greek male prejudice (cf. esp. *Tro.* 1055–9). »» Dover 1974.98–102.

1036–8. when...a husband errs etc.: a specious justification as in A. *Cho.* 918–20: see above, 1011–50 n. The generalization in 1039–40 slyly suggests that Clytemnestra is a victim of the prejudice that blames all women for the misconduct of a few (*Captive Melanippe* F 493, F 495.22–9, *Protesilaus* F 657).

1041–5. Suppose Menelaus etc.: Clytemnestra draws out an implicit contradiction in the case against her (*reductio ad absurdum*): cf. e.g. *Alc.* 699–702, *Andr.* 662–7, *Pho.* 541–7, *Or.* 507–11, 583f.: Lloyd 1992.31f. The 'hypothetical role-reversal' is unique in Euripides but known in contemporary rhetoric, e.g. Antiphon 5.38, Lysias 7.36f.: Lloyd 32 n. 50). Sophocles' Clytemnestra argues that Agamemnon had no right to sacrifice her child for Menelaus's sake, and that Menelaus should have sacrificed one of his own children (S. *El.* 537–45). [There is no need to think a line is missing after 1045 (Diggle 1977.121f.: see Cropp 1982.51f.) or to delete 1041–5 (Wilamowitz, Kovacs 1996.121–3: see 1011–50 n. on their placing within the speech). **οὐ...χρῆν** means 'was it not-right', not 'was-it-not right?': cf. Hutchinson on A. *Sept.* 717, Wackernagel 1926–8.II.259–63.]

1046–8. I took the way that was viable etc.: Sophocles' Electra introduces this argument herself in order to refute it (S. *El.* 591–4). [L's **ἥνπερ** with ὁδόν understood as antecedent gives better sense ('I turned onto the road along which it was possible to travel') than Boissonade's ἧπερ ('I turned in the direction in which...'); Clytemnestra is talking about choosing a course of action. Cf. 604, LSJ 'τρέπω' at end.]

1051–4. There's justice in what you've said etc.: a 'punctuating' choral comment. Its vehemence is a little surprising, but public hostility to Clytemnestra has been mentioned before (see 30 n.) and the Chorus is doing nothing to save her. Their hostility emphasizes her isolation. Orestes' matricide will be evaluated similarly as 'just but unrighteous' (1244, *IT* 559, *Or.* 194). Sophocles' Electra concedes less: 'You admit to killing my father. What admission could be more shameful, whether you killed him justly or not? But I will show you it was not justice that led you to kill him...'. On Greek attitudes to tempering justice see Dover 1974.190–2. **A woman should go along etc.:** a highly conventional view, again emphasizing the odds against Clytemnestra. The classic summary of obedience and *sôphrosynê* in a wife is Andromache's in *Tro.* 645–56; cf. *Oedipus* F 545, 545a. [These lines are assigned to Electra in

L, but Electra would not grant Clytemnestra 'justice', and a choral comment is usual between the two speeches of an *agôn*.]

1055–9. Keep in mind, mother etc.: Sophocles' Clytemnestra gives assurances but then revokes them in her anger at what she hears (S. *El.* 552–7, 626–9); there her power is still real, whereas here Electra is toying with her. **If you hear ill etc.:** κακῶς belongs in common with κλυοῦσα and ἔρξαις. [In 1059 L's οὐκ ἔστι is too vehement ('it's not so!') and ἡδύ cannot mean 'pleasure'. For the correction see Lloyd-Jones 1957.99.]

1060–1101. *Electra's rebuttal.* 1060–8 Clytemnestra's lack of *sôphrosynê*, and her similarity with Helen; the sacrifice of Iphigenia was only a pretext, disproved by her immodest behaviour after Agamemnon left home (1069–75), her disloyalty during the war (1076–85), and her betrayal of her children in favour of Aegisthus (1086–93); conclusion (1093–6), 'If it was just for you to avenge Iphigenia by killing Agamemnon, it would be just for me and Orestes to do the same to you.' If Clytemnestra's speech was equivocal about her adultery, Electra's concentration on it, with her innuendo that it began even before the sacrifice of Iphigenia, allows her to avoid responding directly to the case against Agamemnon as she does in S. *El.* 563–76. The embarrassing subject of Cassandra can be ignored, and Clytemnestra's challenge about justice turned against her. Electra's conclusion is revealingly merged with her complaints about Clytemnestra's mistreatment of Orestes and herself.

1060. here's the opening of my introduction: 'the concise insult in 1061 is the beginning of a proem which extends until 1068. This proem not only contains the insulting comparison with Helen, but also the actual charge (1066–8) which serves as a headline to the speech' (Lloyd 1992.66 with further analysis and illustration of the structure; cf. Goebel 1983.344f. On agonistic proems in general, Lloyd 1992.25–7).

1061. I wish...you had better sense: i.e. *sôphrosynê*, cf. 1080. Aeschylus's Electra prays to be more *sôphrôn* than her mother, A. *Cho.* 140f. The *Odyssey* credits Clytemnestra with an initial display of good sense (*Od.* 3.265–72), which Electra denies here.

1064. both of you reckless: ματαίω (dual form) has a sexual connotation like μῶρον, 1035: see Denniston, and cf. S. *Trach.* 565. **Castor:** cf. 312–3 n., 746, 990–3, 1233–1359 n. The comparison adapts an old commonplace concerning Helen (cf. *Iliad* 3.236–44) which is deployed by Euripides at *Tro.* 131f., *Helen* 137–42 (where it is suggested that the Dioscuri and their mother Leda all committed suicide in shame at Helen's disgrace). Her reputation is paradoxically restored when she is found not to have gone to Troy (1280–3 n., cf. *Hel.* 720) and is translated to enjoy divinity with her brothers (*Or.* 1635–7, 1688–90, cf. *Hel.* 1666–9). [Slings 1997.159f. suggests adjusting Κάστορος to dual Καστόροιν (Castor and his brother, cf. 312–3 n.). But Castor is not always paired with his brother, e.g. *Tro.* 131f. where Helen is 'a disgrace to Castor' (Κάστορι λώβαν).]

1071. dressing your hair's auburn locks: a contrast with Electra's hair (184, 241, 335), and typifying female vanity as in Electra's comment on Helen, *Or.* 128f.

1072–4. if any woman cultivates her beauty: lit. 'forms/refines <herself> towards beauty'. [I do not see much difficulty in this use of ἀσκεῖν, especially after 1071 ἐξήσκεις, although Diggle 1981.40f. revives Wecklein's doubts; cf. Stieber 2011.338f.] **strike her off as no good:** i.e. from the register of respectable women. Enhancing female beauty with hairdressing, perfumes, cosmetics, jewellery, fine clothes etc. could be criticized simply as unnatural (e.g. Xen. *Oec.* 10.12f.), or as typical of *hetairai* or other loose women. Such criticisms became a common moralizing topic (»» Fedeli 1980.88–91 on Propertius 2.1).

1074–5. She has no need etc.: cf. Plut. *Mor.* 139c, 'A woman should be most seen when she is with her husband, and should stay at home and conceal herself when he is absent'.

1076–9. I know too etc.: Hecuba likewise accuses Helen of favouring whichever side was winning at the moment, *Tro.* 1004–7 (*Tro.* 1007 supports Musgrave's emendation of *El.* 1077). We may recall the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's grossly hypocritical account of her loyalty to Agamemnon and her fears for his life during the war (*Ag.* 855–94).

1080. you could have got credit etc.: lit. 'it was open to you to stay virtuous creditably'. [I take **καλῶς** with **σωφρονεῖν** rather than **παρεῖχε** ('you had a fine opportunity') since the credit earned by virtuous behaviour is emphasized in 1084f.; cf. *Alc.* 290–2.]

1081–2. no less a man than Aegisthus: a rhetorical understatement *(litôtês)*. For the comparison between husbands see 166 n. **all Hellas had chosen him:** Agamemnon's position as military and naval commander is important in the *Oresteia* (see Garvie on A. *Cho.* 1071–2). That he was chosen for the position is suggested here and in *Hel.* 395f., *Or.* 1167–9, *IA* 84f. There is a personal aspect (he was man enough to lead) and a political one reflecting Athenian democratic practice by which generals *(stratêgoi)* were elected. In political thought rule by consent distinguished the good king (*basileus*) from the tyrant (*tyrannos*). Agamemnon here resembles the constitutional monarch Theseus of (e.g.) Euripides' *Supplices* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.

1084–5. bad deeds are a pattern etc.: they ensure that good deeds are noticed and bring credit to those who do them. Conversely, acquaintance with the good can provide a standard for avoiding the bad (*Tro.* 600–2). These are sophistic variants on the clichés that good deeds are a model for virtue and punishing bad deeds teaches people to be good. It can equally be argued that the successes of bad men encourage good men to be bad (Eur. F 644). **and make them conspicuous:** lit. 'and hold attention (or perhaps 'visibility/prominence') for them'. [Denniston noted that **εἴσοψιν** (a word found only here) does not mean 'a spectacle' (LSJ, corrected in LSJ *Supp.*). But **παράδειγμα** is probably a subject-complement with ἐστί understood rather than object of **ἔχει**. The word

here has something of its basic sense, 'a (visual) pattern', cf. Stieber 2011. 372f.]

1086–90. But granting...that our father etc.: Sophocles' Electra argues similarly, S. *El.* 584–605. **our ancestral home:** in Athenian law Agamemnon's property would have been held in trust for Orestes, and Electra could have expected a dowry from it. Clytemnestra's rights would not go beyond recovering her personal effects and dowry if she left Agamemnon's house on his death, or being maintained by his estate if she remained unmarried with Orestes as her *kyrios*. »» Lacey 1968.117 and ch. 6, Harrison 1968.44, 48, 56f. **dowered your bed:** **ἐπηνέγκω** refers to a woman's bringing a dowry to her marriage (LSJ 'ἐπιφέρω' II.1), but **λέχει** also suggests a bed loaded with Agamemnon's property to entice Aegisthus. For his appropriation of Agamemnon's wealth cf. A. *Ag.* 1638f., S. *El.* 1290f. Aeschylus's Clytemnestra is accused of trading Orestes into slavery for Aegisthus's favours, *Cho.* 133f., 915–7.

1093–6. if this is to be the way etc.: lit. 'if murder is going to bring murder in exchange, adjudging it (as the penalty)' (Kells 1960.129f.). The idea recalls — and calls into question — that of A. *Cho.* 400–2. Sophocles' Electra makes the same argument (S. *El.* 580–3) but with different effect since she does not know that Orestes has returned. Here the irony begun in 1092 continues at Clytemnestra's expense. But the argument can hardly fail to rebound on Electra: if the murder of Agamemnon was 'unjust', can the murder of Clytemnestra be 'just'? Tyndareus condemns Orestes similarly in *Orestes* 491–517.

[1097–9. Whoever marries a mischievous woman etc.: these lines are deleted by most editors. The comment spoils the climax of Electra's speech and its parallelism with Clytemnestra's conclusion (1049f.). The lines were probably a marginal parallel (cf. 367–400 n.), perhaps for the following choral couplet (if genuine), or for 1090 as Denniston suggests, or for some of Electra's speech against Aegisthus (cf. 926–9, 936f.). For warnings against marrying above one's station cf. 932–7 n., and on preferring a good wife to a rich or distinguished one F 137, F 503. In the manuscripts of Stobaeus the same lines are combined no less ineptly with yet another statement about marriage, *Cretan Women* F 464. *Or.* 602–4 is a very similar interpolation. »» Donzelli 1991b. 119–21. For recent defences see e.g. Michelini 1987.220f., Foley 2001.237.]

1100–1. Women's marriages etc.: lit. 'it's luck with regard to women's marriages'. The comment is banal and barely relevant, and different in tone from 1051–4; some editors therefore delete it. **turn out well:** lit. 'fall well', a dicing metaphor, cf. 639 n. [For defences of 1100–01 see Willink on *Or.* 602–4, Donzelli 1991b.121, Lloyd 1992.68f. Euripides' *agôn* speeches are regularly followed by brief choral comments, some hardly less banal than this. If it belongs here, the Chorus-leader may be distracting Clytemnestra from the danger she faces. If not, it may have originally referred like 1097–9 to men's marriages (**γυναικῶν γάμους** = 'marryings of women'), cf. F 402.6–8, F 463.3–4, F 1056, F 1057). Lloyd notes that it might have displaced an authentic couplet. I retain it without much conviction.]

1102–46. *Completion of the agôn; Clytemnestra lured to her death.* The rapid exchange of arguments which normally follows speeches in an *agôn* merges into the teasing and luring of the doomed victim. (In S. *El.* 1442–65 Electra teases and lures Aegisthus while Clytemnestra lies dead within the palace. For these motifs elsewhere see Schwinge 1968.47–50, Bond on *HF* 701–62.) Ironies abound (see notes below). One short stichomythia exposes the victim's illusions (1116–22), another overcomes her objections to entering the house (1128–31, recalling A. *Ag.* 941–53). A stichomythia following an *agôn* usually continues and intensifies the quarrel, but here Euripides makes Clytemnestra, if not sympathetic, at least vulnerable and ordinary in her anxiety to please both Electra and Aegisthus, while Electra continues to toy with her. She is very different from Aeschylus's or Sophocles' Clytemnestra (or even Pindar's 'ruthless woman', *Pyth.* 11.22) and from hybristic victims such as Aegisthus, Lycus in *Heracles*, or Polymestor in *Hecuba*. Her regrets foreshadow her children's later remorse.

1105–6. I'm not so very glad etc.: contrast S. *El.* 549, 'So I am not downcast at what I've done…'.

1109–10. how foolish I was in my planning: again a contrast; previously she blamed Agamemnon's planning for everything (1011f.). **how excessive the anger etc.:** lit. 'How more than was needed did I drive on into anger at my husband' (cf. LSJ 'ἐλαύνω' I.6). [L's πόσιν gives 'did I drive on my husband (i.e. Aegisthus) to anger', which is inconsistent with 25–30 and 1116–7. The error may be linked with the intrusion of 1107–8 (on which see below after 1130).]

1111–3. Your moaning comes too late etc.: heavily ironic; Clytemnestra can indeed do nothing to save herself, and Orestes is no longer in exile.

1116–22. And why let your husband etc.: each of Electra's lines mockingly alludes to Aegisthus lying dead in her cottage. Clytemnestra unconsciously compounds the irony in 1119, where **οὐκέτ' ἔσται σοι βαρύς** could mean 'he'll no longer trouble you'. Cf. Electra with Aegisthus, S. *El.* 1450–65.

1125–6. make the tenth-night sacrifice etc.: lit. 'sacrifice the child's tenth moon as is commonly practised'; cf. 654 n., and for the sense of the verb LSJ 'θύω' (A) I.4. 'Moon' apparently means 'night', though LSJ gives 'month' and some see a reference to the tenth month from conception. Denniston and Wecklein cite the evidence that the *dekatê* was usually a night-time ceremony.

1127. childless till now: more irony: she still is childless.

1128. That's someone else's job: might she refuse to go in? The hesitation is almost required in a luring scene. It forces Electra to improvise more deception.

1130. Is your house so isolated etc.: lit. 'Is the house located so neighbourless of friends?' (for the last phrase see 310 n.). The Chorus is ignored for the dramatic purpose (contrast 272 n.).

1107–8. And you, so unwashed etc.: if these lines follow 1106 Clytemnestra first expresses her remorse (1105–6), then comments on Electra's condition (1107–

8), and then is further overcome by remorse (1109–10). This interpretation is favoured by Mastronarde (1979.91f.) but is not convincing. 1109–10 follow more naturally as a direct enlargement of 1105–6, and Electra's condition is not the direct result of Clytemnestra's anger against Agamemnon (this fact seems to have caused the corruption in 1110). With 1107–8 transferred the discussion moves from the killing of Agamemnon (1105–12a) to the mistreatment of Orestes (1112b–15) and Electra (1116–22), and so to Electra's present condition and her need for Clytemnestra's help (1123ff.). Electra introduces the topic of childbirth in 1124, so Clytemnestra can hardly mention it earlier. With 1107–8 following 1131 it is the thought of Electra's physical condition that finally persuades her mother to help her. Probably the lines were omitted in the copying of a papyrus text and then mistakenly added to the previous 24-line column (Weil in his note on 1106).

1132. make the sacrifice...for the child's completed term: lit. 'sacrifice (1125–6 n.) the child's completion-bringing item (LSJ 'ἀριθμός' I.4)'.

1133–8. when I've done you this favour etc.: Clytemnestra's last speech is again full of dramatic ironies. Her death will indeed be a **favour** to Electra (**χάριν**, 1133) and will give the **satisfaction** that she 'owes' to her *first* husband Agamemnon (**χάριν**, 1138, in ironic contrast with 61; on the 'satisfaction' of the murdered man in blood-feuds see Rohde 1925.174–82, cf. Mirto 1980.315). Clytemnestra is deceived in thinking that Aegisthus is still sacrificing to the Nymphs, and she will never be free of her own 'sacrificial' death. **Come, servants etc.:** presumably Clytemnestra's female attendants leave along with the men minding the mules. She goes to her death alone and the servants vanish, like the Peasant, the Old Man and the Messenger, into dramatic irrelevance. **the mules:** ὄχος, ὄχημα, ἅρμα properly mean the vehicle but often refer to harness animals (Diggle on *Phaethon* 173).

1139–46. Go on into this poor house etc.: a 'gloating speech' aimed at Clytemnestra's back, modulating from studied irony and ambiguity to open celebration as she moves out of sight and earshot. The earliest example is Clytemnestra's dismissal of Agamemnon in A. *Ag.* 958–74, ironically recalled here. In Euripides' plays *Hec.* 1019–22 and especially *HF* 726–33 are the most similar. »» Taplin 1977.310.

1139–41. pray take care that the soot etc.: cf. A. *Ag.* 774f., 'Justice shines in soot-fouled dwellings'. Electra's **poor house** harbours justice for Clytemnestra, who luxuriates in sinful wealth (cf. *Ag.* 776–80, 958–62). This irony is at least as important as the characterization of Electra ('She never once forgets the squalor of her home': Denniston). [σ(ε)...πέπλους is the *schema ionicum*, 330–1 n.]

1141. you'll make the sacrifice you should: another cruel irony; Clytemnestra is now the 'proper' sacrificial victim. Agamemnon uses the same formula to disguise the sacrifice of Iphigenia in *IA* 720f. [L's θύειν gives similar sense but its long first syllable would be unmetrical (see Denniston).]

1142–4. the basket is prepared etc.: for the ritual details see 790–813 n., 800 n. **The knife...that killed the bull** is the knife with which Orestes killed Aegisthus; he will strike a sacrificial blow as he did before. He will also re-enact the striking down of Agamemnon as a bull (*Odyssey* 11.411, A. *Ag.* 1126).

1144–6. You'll be wedded in Hades too etc.: Electra echoes the taunts of the Aeschylean Orestes (A. *Cho.* 894f., 906f., 975–9). **That much I'll give you as a favour:** a brutal response to the favour Clytemnestra has offered Electra.

1147–1171. Fourth Stasimon. Clytemnestra's death

The stage is again empty and the Chorus reflects on the justice of Clytemnestra's impending death. The song is a strophic pair in chanted dochmiacs (x – – ⏑ – etc.: Dale 1983.67, Donzelli 1995a.81f.). Clytemnestra's cries and the Chorus's (or Chorus-leader's?) responses are iambic, then the Chorus reverts to dochmiacs (1169–71) for a final reflection before the results are revealed. The dochmiac–iambic combination is normal in such stylized sequences accompanying offstage violence: cf. *Med.* 1251–93, *Hec.* 1023–43, *HF* 735–62 (very similar) and 875–909, *Antiope* F 223.46–58. In S. *Electra* 1384–1421 and E. *Orestes* 1246–1310 Electra is with the Chorus. The murder scenes of *Agamemnon* (1331ff.) and *Choephori* (931ff.) are recalled, though differently shaped. The Chorus focuses on the justice of Clytemnestra's punishment for killing Agamemnon, and does not criticize or regret the matricide until it happens (1168 n.).

1147–8. Evils are being repaid: lit. '(Here are) requitals of evils', cf. *Or.* 843, *HF* 226, 1169, *Hel.* 159, Pind. *Nem.* 5.48. [LSJ 'ἀμοιβή' III gives 'changes/ alternations of evils' as in the otherwise very similar beginning of the song accompanying Heracles' killing of Lycus, *HF* 734 (μεταβολὰ κακῶν...); but here the focus is on the requital of Clytemnestra's crime.] **the winds of the house's fortune:** a very common metaphor in tragedy, e.g. *HF* 216, *Ion* 1506, F 153, A. *Pers.* 602, *Sept.* 705–8 (more in Denniston's note here, Bond on *HF* 216).

1149. falling as he was bathed: see 157–8 n. on Agamemnon's λουτρά.

1150–4. The roof of the house cried out: both literal (the building resounded with his cries) and metaphorical (it cried out in horror). The echoing of the house is conveyed by assonance (**ἴαχησε δὲ στέγα. λάϊνοι**), the lingering cry by alliteration (**φονεύσις φίλαν πατρίδα...**) and hyperbaton (**σχέτλιε...γόναι, πατρίδα...ἐμάν**). **after ten years' seed-times:** lit. 'in ten-year sowings' (for the dative so used cf. *Tro.* 20, S. *Phil.* 715, KG 1.446). [For the correction **σχέτλιε** see Diggle 1977.123, 1981.41. Two lines matching 1163–4 seem to be missing after 1154, unless 1163–4 are detached from the antistrophe, as e.g. by Donzelli who makes them an epode: against this see Cropp 1996.395.]

1155–6. Justice's tide flows back etc.: a mixed metaphor, tide (cf. *HF* 739) and legal arraignment (LSJ 'ὑπάγω', II.1); middle **ὑπάγεται** because Justice is bringing Clytemnestra to her own tribunal. **παλίρρους** suggests a tide flowing back to shore (cf. *IT* 1396f.), carrying the offender with it.

1157. [εἰς οἴκους, to his home: the conjectures in the critical apparatus give the same sense but match the rhythm in 1149 exactly (ἀρχέτας – ⏑ –).]

1158. the towering Cyclopean walls: i.e. the walls of Mycenae, still standing today and supposedly built by the giant Cyclopes. Euripides often used 'Cyclopean' to evoke the heroic age (Stieber 2011.90–104). *Tro.* 1087f. has similar phrasing, 'towering stone Cyclopean walls'.

1159. [Seidler's conjecture gives 'with keen-edged weapon struck him down.']

1160. taking an axe in her hands: see 160–1 n.

1161–2. whatever the evil etc.: the question of Clytemnestra's motivation was almost a commonplace: cf. *Odyssey* 3.263–75 (seduction, and loss of a loyal advisor), Pind. *Pyth.* 11.22–5 (Iphigenia, or seduction by Aegisthus?), A. *Ag.* 1407–9 (*Chor.* A drug? — *Clyt.* 'No, Iphigenia').

1163–4. Like some mountain-lioness etc.: in Homeric similes lions may be mountain-reared (*Il.* 5.554, 12.299, 17.61, *Od.* 6.130, 10.292), thicket-roaming (*Il.* 5.555, 17.134, *Od.* 4.335, 17.126), bloodthirsty or 'brooding on destruction' (*Il.* 15.630). Sometimes their destructiveness leads to their own destruction, which adds impact to the simile here. Lion imagery is thematic in the *Oresteia*, e.g. *Ag.* 1258 (Clytemnestra a lioness betraying her lion-husband with the wolf Aegisthus), *Cho.* 937–8 (Orestes an avenging lion): »» Knox 1952. [On the inclusion of these lines in the antistrophe see 1150–4 n.]

1168. I too cry for her etc.: the Chorus's first expression of pity for Clytemnestra. Even if spoken by a single voice this does not conflict with what they have sung about Justice but rather complements it. Her punishment is just, her death at her children's hands is lamentable: this is the *leitmotif* of the closing scenes. There is no dissension within the Chorus such as Denniston (on 1147–1232) perceived here and in the ensuing *amoibaion*.

1169. god dispenses justice, soon or late (lit. 'whenever it occurs'): a commonplace, sometimes specifying Zeus or Dikê, e.g. *Iliad* 4.160–2, Solon fr. 13.27–32 *IEG*, Theognis 203–8, Eur. *Ba.* 882–7, F 223.57f., F 255, F 835, F 979.

1172–1359. Final scenes. Matricide and remorse

1172–6 the bodies revealed, 1177–1232 lyric exchange lamenting the matricide, 1233–91 arrival of the Dioscuri and speech of Castor, 1292–1359 (anapaests) questions, lamentations, farewells, departures.

1172–1232. Orestes and Electra emerge from the house with the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and begin a sung exchange with the Chorus *(amoibaion)*, almost entirely in lyric iambics (432–86 n.: Dale 1983.68f., Donzelli

1995a.82f.). The parts are symmetrically distributed, with some striking symmetries of content and phrasing in each strophic pair. The division of parts is confused in ms. L but can hardly be doubted except at 1226 and 1232 (see below on these). The themes are *(a)* description of the murder, concentrating on Clytemnestra's supplication and its failure, *(b)* reactions of Orestes: hesitation, pain, questioning of Apollo, recognition of pollution and exile, *(c)* reactions of Electra, regretting her hatred, recognizing that she drove Orestes on even during the killing, *(d)* reactions of the Chorus, essentially echoing these feelings. All emphasize the unnaturalness of killing a mother (1182–4 n.: Introduction, pp. 5, 8–9, 19–20). Aegisthus is ignored (whereas the Aeschylean Orestes, proclaiming the justice of both murders, makes much of his complicity, *Cho.* 972ff.). The chorus of *Orestes* recalls the matricide in very similar terms, but with stronger condemnation, *Or.* 819–43: 'Good is not good, when a man cuts a parent's flesh with fire-wrought force and shows his blood-stained sword to the sun's light. Noble ill-doing is impiety tricked out, the madness of wrong-minded men. In terror of death the piteous Tyndarid cried, 'My son, what you dare is unholy, killing your mother; do not link yourself with eternal disgrace to honour your duty to your father'. What sickness, what grief, what misery is greater on earth than setting a mother's blood upon one's hands . . . O wretched he was, when he saw his mother's breast thrust from her gold-woven robe and put his mother to the slaughter to repay his father's death.'

Staging. The Chorus's announcement covers the emergence of Orestes and Electra and (probably) the rolling out of the *ekkyklêma*, a wheeled platform for displaying interior scenes which was almost certainly in use by the time of this play. They are not themselves on it (cf. 1173); rather, the *ekkyklêma* displays the bodies as lying where they fell inside the house. Convention allowed this to be modified so that in 1227–32 Electra and Orestes are handling the bodies outside the house. The scene recalls, with obvious contrasts of mood, the exhibitions of the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra in *Agamemnon* 1371ff., and of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in *Choephori* 973ff., probably also on the *ekkyklêma*.

On the *ekkyklêma* in general see Hourmouziades 1965.93–108, Taplin 1977. 327–9, 357–9, 442f., Newiger 1990, Csapo–Slater 1995.270–2 (ancient refs.). Its use here is doubted by e.g. Denniston on 1177, Newiger 1990.41, Medda 2007. 64f., but the alternative — the bodies carried out by attendants — seems to me less plausible.

1172–6. But here they are etc.: with this chorus's horror contrast the Sophoclean chorus's approval of the matricide: 'And now here they are; his hand drips bloodily with Ares' sacrifice, nor can I find fault' (S. *El.* 1422f. as emended by most editors).

1174. trophies, tokens of grievous slaughters: the pathos now, remarkably, includes Aegisthus (1178–82). If L's text is complete, 1174 must be taken in apposition to 1173 ('Here they come, <and their coming is> evidence of...'), but it is much more likely that a line or two drawing attention to the corpses is

missing. For **τροπαῖα, trophies** so accented see LSJ 'τρόπαιον'. **προσφαγμάτων, slaughters:** the word πρόσφαγμα occurs once in Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1278), six times elsewhere in Euripides (*Alc.* 845, *Hec.* 41, 265, *Tro.* 628, *IT* 243, 458), and once in Plutarch (*Comp.Thes.Rom.* 1.5 using tragic vocabulary), denoting either an act of sacrifice or a sacrificial victim: note especially *Tro.* 628 αἰαῖ, τέκνον, σῶν ἀνοσίων προσφαγμάτων 'Alas, child, for your unholy sacrifice'. [L's προσφθεγμάτων 'addresses/appeals' can hardly be right, although Denniston, followed by Donzelli, explains the sense as 'indications of the rout of her piteous address', i.e. proof that Clytemnestra's appeals for mercy were rejected (τροπαῖα is then an adjective as in 469 and 786, and τροπαῖα δείγματα are 'rout-indications'). Kovacs 1996.124f. revives an interpretation rejected by Denniston, 'clear proof of the meaning of those piteous words', but such proof is hardly needed and Kovacs's singular δεῖγμά τ' is unnecessary in any case.]

1176. the family of Tantalus: see 11 n.

1177. Earth and Zeus who sees all: Orestes cries out like a fellow-victim of the crime; yet the gods called to witness in such formulae (often including the Sun) are also those who would not bear to look on such pollution (Parker 1983.316f. with n. 44). At A. *Cho.* 984–6 Orestes calls on 'all-surveying Sun' to witness the *justice* of the matricide (an appeal explicitly criticized at E. *Or.* 819–22). Zeus too sees all as sky-god and as justice-god, cf. 771 n. At A. *Eum.* 1045 'Zeus all-seeing' and Moira are credited with the happy outcome. For reactions to pollution see 1193–1200 with notes below.

1180. [†***lying on the ground etc.***†: good sense, but the metre (⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –) does not match 1193 (a resolved iambic dimeter ⏑ ⏑⏑ ⏑ – | – – ⏑ –) and the syntax of **πλαγᾷ** is unclear. Diggle's conjecture (cf. 1977.123f.) gives 'poured (i.e. collapsed) on the ground by a double blow'.]

1181ff. The equivalent of 1195–7 **τίς εὐσεβὴς...κτανόντος** is missing after **πημάτων**, so it is hard to say how much Orestes emphasizes his own sufferings as a motive for matricide. One would expect a reference to Agamemnon (cf. 1146, *Or.* 842f.); on the other hand, it is the personal hatred for their mother that Electra takes up (1183f.). Her **lamentable indeed** (1182) suggests that Orestes has just declared that his deeds and/or his hatred were lamentable (cf. *HF* 1414, S. *Aj.* 951, 983, *Trach.* 896).

1182–4. and I am to blame etc.: confirming Electra's decisive role in driving her brother to commit matricide. This is reinforced by the Chorus (1201–5) and Electra herself (1224f.), and is hardly alleviated by Castor's assurances (1296–1307). In *Orestes* 615–21 Tyndareus similarly lays the blame on Electra for inciting Orestes with her complaints, 'until she set the house ablaze with a godless fire'. **I burned with ruthless hatred:** lit. 'I, this ruthless one, went through fire' (see Denniston). **for my mother here who gave me, her daughter, birth:** the pleonastic phrasing conveys pathos rather than sarcasm or indignation as earlier (e.g. 60, 264). Note the similar phrasing at 1186, 1212,

and repeated references to mother, childbearing, and murderous children at 1165, 1168, 1172, 1188, 1197, 1215, 1220, 1223, 1227, 1229.

1185–6. [Alas for the fortune etc.: these lines should match 1201–2. In 1185 Diggle (1969.55) suggested 'Alas for (your) fortune, (your) harsh/hateful fortune', Hutchinson (on A. *Sept.* 170) 'Alas for your hapless fortune'. Barrett prefers to retain L's text in 1185 and adjust it in 1201 (see note there). In 1186 Grotefend's repeated ἄλαστα gives 'bearing grievous children and suffering grievous miseries from them'; Diggle in his critical apparatus compares Stesichorus S 13.2–3 (*PMGF* p. 158) ἐγὼν [μελέ]α καὶ ἀλασ[τοτόκος κ]αὶ ἄλ[ασ]τα παθοῖσα 'Miserable me, bearing grievous offspring and suffering grievous things'.]

1190–3. obscure the justice etc.: i.e., the oracle pronounced by Apollo through his priestess at Delphi commanded an act whose justice is hard to judge but whose outcome is clearly grievous. Clytemnestra may have died 'justly', but how could his killing her have been 'just'? Orestes repeats the doubts about Apollo's command that he felt before he confronted Clytemnestra (967–87). They will be confirmed by Castor (1244–6). Paronomasia (**ἄφαντα, φανερά...φόνια**: cf. 973 n.) gives Orestes' words bitter force; cf. Artemis's reproach to Theseus, *Hipp.* 1288–90, παῖδ' οὐχ ὁσίως σὸν ἀποκτείνας | ψεύδεσι μύθοις ἀλόχου πεισθεὶς | ἀφανῆ· φανερὰν δ' ἔσχεθες ἄτην, 'killing your son impiously, persuaded by your wife's lying words of things not evident — but evident was the ruin you got'. A rationalistic formula, 'Judge what is not evident (ἀφανές) from what is evident (φανερόν)', was current in the second half of the 5th century (e.g. Anaxagoras B 21a DK) and is reflected elsewhere in Euripides (F 574, F 811: »» Egli 2003.77f.). It is common in later writers, e.g. Isocr. 1.34, Ar. *Nic.Eth.* 1104a13. More traditionally, gods can see what is not evident to mortals (Egli aptly cites Alcmaeon B 1 DK). Orestes' words thus suggest both that the outcome reveals a flaw in Apollo's oracle, and that Apollo ought to have given better advice.

1193. exiled from the land of Hellas: Orestes expects to be banished from human society throughout Greece, i.e. from the civilized world. In fact with divine support he will be received at Athens and subsequently in Arcadia: see further 1250–1 n.

1195–6. What host...will look upon my face: Orestes is both ashamed and afraid of polluting others through eye-contact (Parker above, Bond on *HF* 1155f.)

1198–1200. what dance, what wedding etc.: Electra expects to be denied a normal young woman's life through both pollution and social disgrace (cf. Parker 1983.205 comparing *Andr.* 974–6, S. *OT* 1492ff. etc.). A new isolation replaces the earlier isolation caused by her mourning and her humiliating marriage (178–80 n., 247 n.).

1201–5. Back, back has your thinking swung etc.: the Chorus reinforces Electra's recognition of her guilt. **Now it is pure etc.:** lit. 'you think holy things now, then not thinking (them)' (**φρονοῦσα** is an 'imperfect' participle,

SMT §140). For 'holy/unholy' cf. 600 n., 1170. **you wrought dreadful things etc.:** by driving Orestes to kill their mother (1182–4 n.). [Barrett 2007.474 suggests that **φρόνημα** has displaced the poetic word λῆμα, which is glossed several times as φρόνημα in the Euripidean scholia. If so, no change is needed in 1185.]

1206–9. the poor woman...thrust her breast etc.: recalling the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's on-stage appeal which causes Orestes' only hesitation in *Choephori* 896–8. That in turn recalls Hecuba pleading with Hector not to confront Achilles, *Iliad* 22.79ff. The impact on Orestes of his mother's appeal is reinforced in his description of her kneeling in supplication (**pressing to the ground the limbs that bore us**). The moment is recalled again in *Orestes* 526–9, 839–43 (cited above, 1165–1232 n.). **My strength melted away:** lit. 'I melted'. Euripides often uses (συν)τήκομαι for disabling emotions such as grief, misery and anguish, e.g. 208, 240, *Hec.* 433f.; cf. LSJ τήκω II.2. Similarly λείβομαι (144–6 n.). [Seidler's **τακόμαν** is certain. L's τὰν κόμαν δ' ἐγώ could only be taken, implausibly, as an uncompleted sentence, 'And her hair I ...'.]

1213–7. she put her hand to my face etc.: kneeling submissively, Clytemnestra can reach and grasp Orestes' cheek with her right hand in a gesture of supplication (Gould 1973.75–7, Maxwell-Stuart 1975.313). An Attic cup (Ferrara T. 264, dated 435–425; cf. Fraenkel 1950.2.138 n. 2, Prag G2, p. 59 with Pl. 37b) shows *Cassandra*, breast bared and kneeling by an altar, her right hand reaching to grasp *Clytemnestra*'s chin as Clytemnestra swings her axe. Euripides perhaps adapted this iconography so as to transfer its pathos to Clytemnestra while also recalling her own murders. But a similar iconography of Clytemnestra supplicating Orestes may already have existed: see Prag 40f. with Pl. 27, 28c, the latter reproduced on the cover of this book. **She clung to my cheeks**: lit. 'hung from': see LSJ 'κρήμνημι', LSJ *Supp.* 'κρίμνημι'. [Denniston followed Wilamowitz in assigning these lines to Electra but changed his mind in his *Addenda* (p. 226), finding the decision 'remarkably difficult'. I think it is quite clear that lines 1206–9, 1213–7 and 1221–3 are Orestes' account of the ordeal of killing his mother, and that 1213–7 prompts the Chorus's question in 1218–20 which he answers in 1221–3.]

1218–20. Poor woman etc.: rhythm and phrasing echo and reinforce the horror of 1210–2.

1221–3. I threw my cloak about my eyes: trying to distance himself from his action by shielding himself from the piteous sight of his victim, and avoiding her supplication by preventing eye-contact (see Gould, 85–90). By reaching up to grasp his cheek she has laid her throat open to the death-blow. The similarity with Perseus (cf. 459f., *Cho.* 831–7) avoiding the Gorgon's stare has been much noticed (after Headlam 1901.99, cf. O'Brien 1964.17f.). There may also be a reminiscence of Agamemnon veiling himself at the sacrifice of Iphigenia (note the sacrificial language here), although that gesture is not attested before the 4th century: it appears in *IA* 1547–50 (part of the post-Euripidean complet-

ion of the play), in the lost 4th-century painting of the scene by Timanthes (*LIMC* I 'Agamemnon' no. 31 = V 'Iphigenia' no. 4), and often in later art, notably a famous mural from the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii (*LIMC* 'Agamemnon' no. 41 = 'Iphigenia' no. 38). **and began the sacrifice with my sword:** cf. 485 n. The verb κατάρχομαι normally refers to preliminary sacrificial procedure, including the cutting of hairs from the animal victim's head with a ritual knife. Here the process is perverted and the sacrifice begins with the death-blow (Mirto 1980.320f.). Denniston's conclusion that 'Orestes uses a ritual word in order to convince himself that the matricide is no mere act of human vengeance, but the carrying out of a divine behest' is hardly consistent with the remorse Orestes is suffering here.

1224–5. And I urged you on: cf. S. *El.* 1415 (Electra hearing Clytemnestra's cries from within the palace), 'Strike a second blow if you have the strength'. **and grasped the sword:** Electra makes the same claim in *Orestes* 1235, where Willink argues that it should not be taken literally. Others take it literally here, noting that Orestes has lost his grip on the sword (1217) and covered his eyes (1221). Either way, the claim stresses Electra's sense of her own guilt (1182–4 n.).

1226. You wrought the most terrible of sufferings: i.e. upon your mother. The Greek verb is singular and the comment addressed primarily to Orestes, with a suggestion that the killing was an ordeal (πάθος) for him as well as her. A different sense, that Electra inflicted the most terrible of sufferings on Orestes, would echo 1204f. but is less apt at this point. [L gives this line to the Chorus and the corresponding line 1232 to Electra along with 1230–1. One of these must be wrong: either 1226 and 1232 both belong to the Chorus (Kirchhoff, Wecklein, Murray, Donzelli), or 1224–6 and 1230–2 all belong to Electra (Seidler, Paley, Diggle, Kovacs, all changing **ἔρεξας** to ἔρεξα 'I inflicted'). The first alternative is more likely, so that the Chorus responds to Orestes' and Electra's laments as in the first two strophic pairs. »» Slings 1997.160f.]

1227–9. Take this robe etc.: Electra, now a dutiful daughter, composes the body for its laying-out. The robe may be contrasted with the one Orestes exhibited over Clytemnestra's body (the same one that she had used to entrap Agamemnon) in *Choephori* 980–1017 (πέπλους 1000, φᾶρος 1011). Covering is also needed because gods are about to appear and may not look on corpses (cf. *Hipp.* 1437).

1230–1. dear and not dear at once: both mother and foe to her children.

1232. The end of great troubles etc.: lit. 'the finish', a race-course metaphor implying both culmination and finality, cf. *Supp.* 369, *Tro.* 1273, F 211. [**τέρμα** is accusative in apposition to the previous sentence. For the assignment of this line to the Chorus see above on 1226.]

1233–7. *Arrival of the Dioscuri (dei ex machina).* Divine epiphanies were an element of Greek religious belief from at least the late Bronze Age and became a conventional poetic motif (»» *OCD* 'epiphany'). Those in tragedy have a preced-

ent in the ending of the *Odyssey*, where Athena reveals her presence and directs an end to the civil war in Ithaca. Besides *Electra*, epiphanies conclude *Hippolytus, Andromache, Suppliant Women, Iphigenia in Tauris, Ion, Helen* (the Disocuri again), *Orestes, Bacchae,* Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, and the fourth-century *Rhesus*. *Iphigenia at Aulis* originally had one, and there are extensive fragments from *Antiope* and *Erechtheus* (for other fragmentary plays of Euripides see Collard–Cropp 2008b.693, 'Gods: at play-end'). For staging questions note also *Med.* 1317ff., *HF* 815ff. Evidence from Aristophanes shows that the *mêchanê* or 'crane' was available for flying scenes at least by 425 B.C., and the term *deus ex machina* ('god from the machine') is conventional, but it is not certain that all the epiphanies listed above used machinery. In *Electra* it is virtually certain: the Dioscuri appear above the house (1233), their path is not a mortals' one (1235f.), they come from a stormy sea (1241–3) and travel through the air (1349). The *mêchanê* will have been used for their arrival and departure, depositing them for the bulk of the scene on the roof of the stage-building, or on a special platform for gods (*theologeion*) if that existed at the time. »» Mastronarde 1990, Newiger 1990, Csapo–Slater 1995.268–70 (ancient refs.).

The Dioscuri are a Greek form of the Indo-European Divine Twins, sons of the sky-god, notable as horse-riders and protectors of mortals by land and sea (cf. 990–3). They have a special interest as brothers of Clytemnestra and Helen, which prompts the question why they did not protect Clytemnestra (1298ff.). As sons of Zeus they are fairly high in the divine hierarchy (but below Apollo, 1245; cf. 1234–5 n.). They have however lived human lives and have only lately been given divine status when Castor was killed and Zeus allowed him to share Polydeuces' immortality. »» West 2007.186–91 (Indo-European background), Gantz 1993. 323–8, *LIMC* III 'Dioskouroi', Jouan 1966.153–6, 195–8.

The Dioscuri stand between the experiences and ignorance of the mortals in the play and the remoteness and disinterest of Zeus and Apollo, like the recently deified Heracles at the end of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* or Achilles' mother Thetis in *Andromache*. Significantly Apollo does not appear in person and is left open to criticism, like Aphrodite in *Hippolytus* and Apollo again in *Ion*. The intermediate status of the Dioscuri cuts both ways. Earlier allusions (249, 312–3 n., 746, 990 n., 1064 n.) contrasted their nobility and blessedness with the troubled conditions of their mortal relatives, and this contrast still holds. They may sympathize with the sufferers and criticize Apollo, but now they live on Apollo's side of the fence (cf. 1327–30 n.). This is due in part to their nobility which Clytemnestra, Orestes and Electra did not emulate, but in part also to a good fortune (*eudaimonia*) that they did not share. The dispensation they announce lacks the easy acceptability of the happy endings proclaimed by them in *Helen* and by Apollo himself in *Orestes*. On this point, and the relevance of this conclusion to the action of the play, see Introduction, pp. 11–12.

1233. above the house's topmost height: the Greek phrase is poetic and rather grandiose, more apt for the occasion than for the Peasant's cottage.

1234–5. spirits or heavenly gods: *daimones* 'spirits' and *theoi* 'gods' were sometimes virtually synonymous. When distinguished, *daimones* were subordinate, less heavenly, and in some cases less anthropomorphic (»» Burkert 1985. 179–81, 328–32, Parker 2011.64–79. The phrase here is comprehensive and does not raise the question of status. Plato would have classed the Dioscuri as *daimones* (ex-humans, sons of a god, communicators to men, cf. *Symp.* 202 d–e), but they are *theoi* at 1298 and 1328f.

1236–7. Why are they coming etc.: Greek gods are visible to humans only when they choose to be. They may appear to selected individuals (e.g. Athena to Achilles, *Iliad* 1.193–222), or in disguise (e.g. Athena to Odysseus, *Od.* 13. 221–6, 287–301 etc.). This public appearance signals a purposeful intervention in human affairs.

1238–91. *Castor's speech.* 1238–48 self-introduction and comment on the matricide; 1249–75 directions for Electra's marriage and Orestes' exile, pursuit by the Erinyes, flight to Athens, trial on the Areopagus (with account of the court's origin), acquittal by tied vote (with aetiologies of the tied-vote rule and the sanctuary of the Erinyes), and foundation of Orestheion in Arcadia; 1276–83 directions for the burials of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, with explanation of Helen's sojourn in Egypt and the futility of the Trojan War; 1284–91 Pylades, Electra and Orestes dispatched, with assurances of wealth for the Peasant in Phocis and eventual happiness for Orestes.

Castor, like other gods in such interventions, gives an Olympian perspective transcending that of the humans involved in the tragic event, and directs their futures on paths that will fit the requirements of Moira/Destiny and her guarantor Zeus (1248 n.). He cannot offer full satisfaction: Apollo's unwisdom is ultimately unjustified (1245–7), and Orestes faces further ordeals and can never return to Argos. These imperfections are emphasized by the revelation that the Trojan War, the source of all these ills, was a deception, and by the unusually discontented reactions of those he is trying to console (1292–1359 n.). »» Mastronarde 2010. 185–95 discusses the judgements delivered by epilogue gods in general and Castor in particular.

1244–6. Her punishment is just etc.: it was right for a treacherous, husband-killing wife to be punished, but wrong for a son to kill his mother. Tyndareus (Clytemnestra's father) says the same in *Orestes* 538f., the Chorus more fully in *Or.* 819–43, and Iphigenia more briefly in *IT* 559. **Phoebus...did not instruct you wisely:** cf. 971–2 n.

1248. Destiny and Zeus: Moira ('apportionment') is the power that shapes events and lives (individuals' *moirai* or 'portions') within a general scheme of 'what must be'. Myth personifies three Moirai, cf. Gantz 1993.7f., 60f. Zeus enforces what the Moirai determine, and they were increasingly subordinated to him: Hesiod makes them daughters of Night but later daughters of Zeus (*Theog.* 217, 904–6), and Zeus has a cult title Moiragetês 'guide of destiny'. Aeschylus

associates Zeus and Moira in the realm of retributive and restorative justice (see Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 1535f.). There may well be an ironic comment here (along with 1290, 1301) on the assurances in the *Oresteia* that the matricide and its aftermath have fulfilled a scheme of Zeus and Moira (*Cho.* 306–8, *Eum.* 1045f.). [The singular verb **ἔκραυε** with two singular subjects is not unusual, e.g. 1279f., 1301: Gildersleeve 1900, §§473–7.]

1249. Give Electra to Pylades: Orestes is now Electra's *kyrios*, cf. 259 n. Euripides refers consistently to this marriage (*IT* 695f., 915, *Or.* 1092f., 1658f.; cf. Hellanicus F 155 Jacoby/Fowler).

1250–1. and you, leave Argos etc.: most kinds of homicide incurred exile pending purification since the victim's wrath and the killer's pollution were particularly threatening to their own community (»» MacDowell 1978.113–20, Parker 1983.104–30, esp. 118, and 386–8 on Orestes). Orestes' exile and pursuit by the Erinyes are not mentioned in the *Odyssey*, where the matricide is not explicit and he is said to have presided over the burials of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra (*Od.* 3.306ff.). They are overlooked by Pindar in *Pyth.* 11 and in Sophocles' *Electra* (though some hold that Sophocles implies them: on this issue see Finglass 2007b.526–8). Some kind of persecution by the Erinyes can be traced back to the 6th century in literature (Stesichorus' *Oresteia, PMGF* 217) and probably in art (metope 26 from Foce del Sele: Prag E1, Pl. 28b with p. 44f.). **you cannot set foot in this city:** recalling the Chorus's prayer after the recognition of Orestes, 'that with favouring fortune your brother may set foot in the city' (594f.).

1252–3. The dreadful Kêres: the Kêres are here identified with the Erinyes. They are sometimes simply death spirits, but Hesiod has Kêres (also θεαί 'deities') who relentlessly punish human and divine transgressions (*Theog.* 217–22, Gantz 1993.8f.). **hound-eyed deities:** in this scene the Erinyes are imaged as hounds (here and 1342–4), snakes or wielding snakes (1256, 1345), and dark-skinned (1345). These are all Aeschylean features (hounds, *Cho.* 924, 1054, *Eum.* 111–3, 131f. etc.; snake-wielding *Eum.* 128, *Cho.* 1049f.; dark and dark-clothed *Ag.* 462f., *Cho.* 1048f., *Eum.* 52). The snake features appear in archaic art. Numerous 'demons' in Minoan and Mycenean art seem to have both snake and hound features; Sansone identifies these as Erinyes responsible for enforcing the processes of nature (a deity named *E-ri-nu* is known from Mycenean Crete). After the *Oresteia* Erinyes are depicted in female human form, sometimes winged, and wielding snakes which sometimes reach out as if to bite the victim, and/or with snakes in their hair. »» Prag 1985.44–51 with Pl. 28–33, Sansone 1988. **will drive you wheeling etc.:** lit. 'will charioteer you', as if using whips or goads: cf. *IT* 82f., *Or.* 36, 44f. In *Choephori* 1021–5 Orestes is himself a charioteer madly driving off the course (Garvie's note illustrates both images). Madness could be thought of as a direct effect of murder pollution (e.g. A. *Cho.* 1055f., E. *HF* 966f.), or linked with the murderer's terror of the Erinyes. Their 'dreadfulness' is stressed in 1252, 1256, 1270, 1344. »» Parker 1983.128f.

1254–5. But go to Athens: in *Odyssey* 3.307 Athens is Orestes' place of refuge *before* his return and vengeance. It was presumably Aeschylus who put Athens at the centre of the story of Orestes *after* the matricide. Euripides here (and apparently at *IT* 943) omits Orestes' flight to Delphi (*Cho.* 1034ff.), whence Apollo sends him to Athens (*Eum.* 78ff.). In *Orestes* 1643–52, after a fruitless trial at Argos, Apollo sends him to spend a year in Arcadia (see 1273–5 n. below) *before* proceeding to Athens for trial. **embrace the sacred image of Pallas:** as he does on stage in *Eumenides* (80, 242, 259f., 409). This is a conventional way of supplicating a god, the physical contact being a crucial guarantee of protection (Gould 1973.78). The image (**βρέτας**) is presumably the image of Athena Polias, said to have been of olive-wood and described by e.g. schol. Dem. 22.13, Pausanias 1.26.6. Its form is much discussed. »» *LIMC* II 'Athena' A. 3 (with commentary, p. 1017).

1255–7. as they seethe etc.: so Denniston. Alternatively, 'terrified by her dreadful serpents', i.e. those on Athena's aegis (so LSJ 'πτοέω', Kamerbeek 1987. 285), but the serpents are more important to the picture of the Erinyes threatening Orestes. In *IT* 287 Orestes sees an Erinys 'whetted (ἐστομωμένη) with dreadful serpents against me'. **holding out her gorgon-faced aegis etc.:** I now think that **κύκλον** (lit. 'circle') here means Athena's **aegis** rather than her shield as Denniston and others say. The great statue of Athena Parthenos had gorgon heads on both aegis and shield. The aegis (a protective cape) is more suitable for extending over Orestes' head. Shields are often κύκλοι in tragic poetry, but aegises are also round. The nature and mythology of the aegis are of course complicated (»» *OCD* 'aegis', Gantz 1993.84f., 448).

1258–63. a hill of Ares: here and in *IT* 943–6 Euripides follows a pre-Aeschylean account ascribing the foundation of the Areopagus court to the trial and acquittal of Ares by the gods after he killed Poseidon's son Halirrhothius for raping his daughter Alcippe (»» *OCD* 'Ares', Parker 1983.379); this provided an etymology for the name 'Areopagus'. In the *Oresteia* Aeschylus invented a new 'civic' account in which Athena created the court for the trial of Orestes by a jury of Athenian men (*Eum.* 482–4, with a new etymology 685–90). »» Stephanopoulos 1980.148–57, Wallace 1989.87–93, Carrara 2007. **in wrath:** **μῆνιν** is in apposition to the previous clause; the killing enacted Ares' wrath. **votes have been cast etc.:** lit. '(there is) a most scrupulous and a sure vote-casting'. Fairness and incorruptibility were part of the ideology of the Areopagus court (A. *Eum.* 482a–4, E. *IT* 945 ὁσιὰ ψῆφος, *Or.* 1651–2 εὐσεβεστάτη ψῆφος, Dem. 23.66, Dinarchus 1.87; Wallace 1989.126f.). Anonymous voting (dramatized in *Eum.* 674–753) promoted equity in Athenian courts. The jury for Orestes will of course be human (1317–20) as in *Eumenides* and in *IT* 961–7, although in *Orestes* 1648–52 it becomes divine ('to cancel the human verdict of the Argive assembly', Willink; Dem. 23.66 treats its divinity as a traditional fact). [In 1263 L has 'a vote (ψῆφος) most scrupulous and sure for the gods (θεοῖς)'. *IT* 945 and *Or.* 1651f. make it tempting to retain ψῆφος, and 'for the gods' might possibly mean 'in the eyes of the gods' (a possibility rejected by

Denniston but favoured by Distilo amongst others); otherwise θεοῖς would have to be changed to e.g. βροτοῖς 'for men' (Kirchhoff).]

1264. you too must face trial: lit. 'run (a race)'; see LSJ 'τρέχω' II.2, Denniston.

1265–6. Votes equally cast: the same ambivalent outcome as in *Eumenides* 752f., cf. *IT* 965f.

1266–7. Loxias will take the blame: as in *Eum.* 84, 198–203, 465–7, 579f., 797–9, cf. *IT* 965. The etymology of 'Loxias' is unknown; it was commonly linked with the word λοξός 'oblique'. In practice it always referred to Apollo as a god of prophecy.

1268–9. this law will be laid down etc.: the 'law' is established in *Eumenides* when Athena votes to acquit Orestes and then declares him acquitted if the votes are tied, as they turn out to be (*Eum.* 734–41, 752f.). It is not clear whether her vote creates a tie or serves to break a tie amongst the human jurors; I think the latter more likely. On actual voting procedures at Athens see MacDowell 1978.252–4, Todd 1993.132f.

1270–2. And so the dreadful goddesses etc.: at the end of *Eumenides* the Erinyes, angered at their defeat, are mollified by Athena and agree to live at Athens, guaranteeing its fertility, abundance and political and social welfare in return for worship. Their underground dwelling incorporates them into the land and life of the city. Aeschylus's story provided a mythical identification of the Erinyes with the deities known at Athens as Semnai Theai ('Revered Goddesses') or euphemistically as Eumenides ('Kindly Ones'). In reality the two groups are best understood as two manifestations of the same chthonic powers enforcing natural law and justice, beneficent when duly obeyed and honoured by the community, angry and destructive when crossed. Euripides here develops Aeschylus's myth, suggesting a little irreverently that their own frustration drove the Erinyes into the ground, whereas in *Eumenides* Athena *persuades* them with promises of worship. In *Iphigenia in Tauris* some of them have persisted in rejecting the Athenian verdict (*IT* 968–71) and pursuing Orestes. In *Orestes* the functional distinction between Erinyes and Eumenides becomes blurred, the Erinyes being called Eumenides even in their punitive role (*Or.* 38, 321 etc.). »» Lloyd-Jones 1990, Henrichs 1991, 1994, Johnston 1999.267–87. **right by the hill:** cf. *Eum.* 804–7, 854f., *IT* 968f. The site of the sanctuary on the NE slope of the Areopagus hill is described by Pausanias 1.28.6 but has not been exactly identified. **a venerable oracle: σεμνὸν** alludes to the name of the Semnai Theai. Their sanctuary is not otherwise known to have contained an oracle, though a chasm is a natural site for one. Their best-known practical function was as guarantors of oaths and justice in the homicide trials conducted by the Areopagus court (»» Henrichs 1994.40, 45f., Parker 2005.406).

1273–5. an Arcadian city: presumably Orest(h)eion/Oresthasion, some 10 km. SE of the later Megalopolis (»» Gomme–Andrewes–Dover on Thuc. 5.64.3; Drakopoulos 1991, 1992). Orestes was assimilated with the local Arcadian hero Orestheus: see Frazer on Pausanias 8.44.2, Willink on *Orestes* 1645–7 (where Orestes only has to dwell there for a year *before* his acquittal at Athens). Stories

of exile were always open to alteration for local political and genealogical reasons. More commonly Orestes settles at Argos/Mycenae (or Sparta) and his son Tisamenus rules until the return of the Heracleidae. The seemingly perpetual exile in Arcadia looks like an *ad hoc* variation on the story that he died there (see e.g. Frazer on Apollodorus *epit.* 6.28). The **Lycaean sanctuary** is the sanctuary of Zeus Lykaios on Mount Lykaion, actually some 20 km. NW of Orestheion (Strabo 8.8.2, Pausanias 8.38.6).

1276–7. Aegisthus' body etc.: the ends of Euripides' plays account scrupulously for the burials of those who have died and/or the traditions associated with their burial places: cf. *Med.* 1377–81, *Hcld.* 1030–6, *Hipp.* 1423–30, *Andr.* 1263–6, *Supp.* 1210–2, *HF* 1360–3, 1419f., *Erechtheus* F 370.65ff., *Antiope* F 223.80–5. In Roman times tombs of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra were shown outside the walls of Mycenae, and tombs of Agamemnon, Cassandra and Electra inside (Pausanias 2.16.6).

1278. As for your mother: Orestes is disqualified from fulfilling this important duty of sons to mothers (e.g. Lysias 31.20–23, Dem. 57.70).

1279. Menelaus has recently arrived: as in *Odyssey* 3.311, 4.546f., Eur. *Orestes* 53–6, 369–74, 471–3.

1280–1. for Helen too has returned etc.: in the epic tradition (esp. *Od.* 3.299ff. and 4) Menelaus and Helen were blown off course to Egypt on their way home from Troy and stayed there for seven years. **Proteus** in that account was the Old Man of the Sea, from whom Menelaus received information and a prophecy. The earliest known account of Paris taking a **phantom** to Troy was in Stesichorus' famous *Palinode(s)*, of which we have only the barest outline (frs. 192–3 *PMGF*); where the real Helen stayed in this account is unclear (Gantz 574f.). Herodotus 2.113–9 has a rationalized story with Helen and Paris blown off course on their way to Troy, Helen detained by king Proteus in Egypt, and Menelaus recovering her after misguidedly sacking Troy. Euripides would elaborate on the phantom story in *Helen*, but there is no need to see these lines as 'advertising' that play (cf. Introduction, pp. 31–2, Zuntz 1963.64–6); in this context they stress the futility of human purposes, sufferings and ignorance, and contrast the good fortune of the unscathed couple with the havoc they caused both at home and at Troy. Helen's brothers appropriately present this apologia, which also puts Clytemnestra's guilt in a different light (contrast 213f.). One tradition claimed it was they who blinded Stesichorus for insulting Helen and restored his sight after he recanted (Horace, *Epodes* 17.42 with schol.). Gorgias offered a different paradoxical exculpation in his showpiece *Encomium of Helen* (B 11 DK, date unknown but quite possibly earlier than *Electra*). »» Kannicht 1969.1.22–48, Gantz 1993.571–6, 663f., Burian 2007.4–9, Allan 2008.18–28. West 1975 relates the myth of Helen in Egypt to her origin as a nature goddess preceding any connection with the Trojan war story.

1282–3. Zeus, wanting to cause strife etc.: cf. F 1082 (context unknown), 'Zeus planned these things wanting evil for the Trojans and harm for Greece'. The explanation is repeated in *Helen* 36–40 with the phantom story, and in *Orestes*

1639–42 without it, both adding that Zeus devised the war over Helen in order to relieve the Earth of overpopulation. That was the account of the epic *Cypria* (fr. 1), but according to the Hesiodic *Catalogue* (fr. 204.94ff.) Zeus meant to exterminate the whole race of mortals and the demigods or heroes produced by their unions with gods, thus leaving the gods to their own tranquil existence. These motifs are shared with Mesopotamian myths, which mention divine schemes to exterminate a troublesome generation of gods (*Enuma Elish*) or to eliminate humans because of their proliferation by means of a flood (*Atrahasis*, *Gilgamesh*: the outcome here is the invention of death as an alternative means of population control). In the biblical story, *Genesis* 6.5ff., Yahweh sends the flood to eliminate the human race because of its wickedness, but the narrative is preceded by a description of an extinct race of demigods, displeasing to Yahweh because of its mixed divine–human lineage, which seems to correspond to the heroes of Greek legend (*Gen.* 6.1–4). »» Jouan 1966.42–54, West 1985. 115–21, 1997.480–2.

1284–7. let Pylades take his virgin wife etc.: a reminder that Electra is still a virgin despite her marriage to the Peasant, whose 'right-mindedness' is about to be rewarded. **your brother-in-law in name:** a final loose end neatly tied up. The Peasant, not being on stage, is not asked whether he wants this transportation. He ought not to be impressed with the grant of wealth (cf. 426–31). [**an abundance** (lit. 'depth') **of wealth:** Herwerden corrected L's βάρος 'weight' to **βάθος** 'depth' as in S. *Ajax* 130. See also Denniston's note, and note the adj. βαθύπλουτος 'with deep wealth', e.g. A. *Supp.* 554, Bacchyl. 3.82, Eur. F 453.1. 'Deep wealth' etc. is well attested in later Greek, 'heavy wealth' etc. much less so.]

1290. your destined lot of murder: cf. 1248 n., 1301 n.

1292–1359. *Dialogue*: 1292–1307 Castor questioned on responsibilities, 1308–30 Orestes and Electra lament their futures, 1331–59 farewells and departures. The whole sequence is in chanted anapaests (⏑ ⏑ – etc.), each section ending with a paroemiac clausula (– – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – – etc.: 1307, 1330, 1356, 1359). Greek tragedies often end with a brief wrap-up by the Chorus as in 1357–9. There are longer sequences with dialogue in *Med.* 1399–1419, *Ba.* 1368–92, S. *Phil.* 1445–71, *OC* 1751–79, [A.] *PV* 1040–93. Castor's parting speech is like Apollo's in *Or.* 1682–90. In most *deus* scenes the god's speech is followed by brief acceptance(s) by the human principal(s), and departures. In *Hippolytus* this scheme is complicated by the lamentation of Hippolytus, his reconciliation with Theseus after Artemis has explained Aphrodite's role, and his death. *Bacchae* has protests against Dionysus's ruthlessness and lamentations about the future. *Electra* likewise ends with doubts, regrets and questionings.

[In 1292–1307 L's indications of speakers are correct except for the omissions at 1298 and 1303 (see critical apparatus; full details in the editions of Diggle and Donzelli). Victorius introduced the Chorus speaking 1292–3 and 1298–1300 (followed by most editors until recently), and Arnoldt placed 1295–7 after 1302

(followed by some). These changes have caused unnecessary confusion which is only partly corrected in Denniston's commentary. For the right allocation see Stoessl 1956.82–5, Steidle 1968.85–7, Donzelli 1978.210–3, 1991.29–34, Kovacs 1985.310–4. Choruses do not normally converse with a *deus ex machina*, and Orestes must take the lead in addressing the Dioscuri after Castor has addressed him throughout his speech.]

1292–3. is it lawful etc.: Orestes fears that pollution from his 'bloody defiling deeds' (1178f.) might violate the gods' sanctity. Castor has addressed him, but Orestes is now proposing a direct dialogue which might pollute like eye-contact (1195–6 n.). For his phrasing cf. *IT* 1211f.: 'Such things are polluted (μυσαρά) ...no one must approach within sight of them (εἰς ὄψιν πελάζειν)'. At *Alc.* 1144 Admetus has addressed the lately dead Alcestis but it is not lawful (*themis*) for him to hear her voice. Cf. also *Hipp.* 1283–1451 (Artemis converses with the guilty Theseus and the dying Hippolytus, but it is not *themis* for her to witness Hippolytus's death, 1437) and *IT* 1157–78 (Iphigenia claims that Orestes and Pylades have polluted Artemis's statue, and that the statue averted its eyes from them).

1294. for you are not defiled: Orestes is not polluted, or at least not enough to incur the consequences he envisaged in 1177–9, 1194–7. Castor has not mentioned pollution in his speech, nor ordered purifications (though formal purifications might still be expected). The reason is that Apollo is αἴτιος, 'responsible' (1266f., 1296f.). After this Orestes and Electra no longer mention pollution or purification. Castor's announcement in 1350 that the Dioscuri do not protect the polluted (μυσαροί) reiterates his point. The perception of murder-pollution is a relative and subjective matter, intertwined with the perception of responsibility (»» Parker 1983.111–30, 308–21). In *Hippolytus* Artemis assures Theseus that he killed his son 'unholily' (οὐχ ὁσίως) but is forgivable and unpolluted in view of Aphrodite's responsibility (*Hipp.* 1286–95, 1325–7, 1431–4, 1448–51). Castor's assurance is echoed in *Orestes* 75f., 597f. with an irony that is not entirely absent here. His bland reliance on a nice point of religious law shows his detachment from the mortals' subjective and emotional point of view.

1298–1300. How, being gods etc.: the same question arises in the *Iliad* when (e.g.) Zeus and Apollo leave Sarpedon and Hector to their fates. It is posed several times in Euripides: *Hipp.* 1327–34 (Artemis and Hippolytus), *HF* 828–32 (Zeus and Heracles), *Tro.* 23–5 (Poseidon and Troy), *Hel.* 1658–61 (the Dioscuri and Helen); cf. *Ba.* 1348–9 (Dionysus's vindictive treatment of Cadmus's family). The answers point to the wishes of interested gods and the authority of destiny and/or Zeus. They assert the inevitability of what has happened without really justifying it.

1300. the Kêres: here simply spirits of death rather than the avenging Kêres/ Erinyes of 1252, although Denniston assumes a reference to the latter and Donzelli (1978.213 n. 41) allows it. Aeschylus makes much of the idea that the

House of Atreus is being gradually destroyed by Erinyes because of its past sins, but this seems out of place in Euripides' play.

1301. Destiny and Necessity led you etc.: for Moira/Destiny see 1248 n. Anankê/Necessity is little more than the same power looked at in terms of outcomes. Castor means that the matricide was not simply due to Apollo's will (as his previous reply suggested), and that he and his brother could not simply have intervened to prevent it. Apollo acted within parameters set by Moira (cf. Apollo himself explaining why he did not prevent the downfall of king Croesus, Hdt. 1.91); he acted clumsily, and with more wisdom might have found a better course. Even humans with sufficient religious wisdom *(sophia)* could influence the course of events (cf. Pl. *Symp.* 201d 3–5 with Dover's note). [L's text does not make sense, and Tucker's **ἦγ' ἐς τὸ χρεὼν** 'led to what must be' is widely accepted. The previous phrase has been variously adjusted: 'necessity's allotment led' (Bothe), 'What must be brought necessity's allotment' (Seidler), 'necessity's allotment led you...' (Tucker), 'destiny and necessity led...' (Diggle), 'necessity led your allotment' (Donzelli in her critical apparatus, comparing F 491.3, *Andr.* 1007). I prefer **Destiny and Necessity led you...**: Castor has already named Moira in 1248, and **led you** makes good sense since he is talking to Orestes and explaining why *he* was led to kill his mother; Electra then asks why *she* had to be involved. For the singular verb **ἦγε** see 1248 n.]

1302. Phoebus's unwise proclamations: cf. 971–2 n., 1244–6 n. **ἀνοσαί** marks the loud oracular cry (see Denniston), as also cries of grief or horror (144, 198, 1151). Other words for shouting (λάσκειν, κλάζειν) were used similarly (Easterling on S. *Trach.* 824–5).

1303–4. [what Apollo, what decrees etc.: for the phrasing **τίς...ποῖοι** cf. e.g. *Andr.* 388–90, *Hec.* 159. For **ἔδοσαν ordained** cf. *Hipp.* 1434, LSJ 'δίδωμι' I.2.]

1305–7. Your actions were shared etc.: Electra's destiny was inseparable from that of Orestes and their family. **a single inherited doom: ἄτη πατέρων** is lit. 'a doom from your forefathers'; cf. *HF* 917f. ἄταν πατέρος, 'ruin brought about by their father'. This may point both to the ruinous family feud initiated by the conflict of Atreus and Thyestes over the golden lamb (699–746 n.) and to the crimes of Tantalus (11 n.) and Pelops (cursed by Myrtilus when he killed him) which caused the gods to provoke that feud. In *Orestes* the Chorus treats the golden lamb episode as the beginning of the family's downfall (*Or.* 807–18), while Electra includes the earlier events (*Or.* 1–15, 988–1012). See also *IT* 186–202.

1311–3. She has a husband etc.: again a superficial consolation.

1314–5. And what other griefs are greater etc.: the miseries of exile are a common topic in Euripides, e.g. *Pho.* 388–407, F 30. See also 82–5 n., 606–7 n.

1319–20. the city of Pallas is god-fearing: cf. 1258–63 n. [L's word-order is altered by editors to avoid the sequence of two resolved syllables in Παλλάδος ὁσίαν (– ᴗᴗ ᴗᴗ –): see Denniston.]

1323–4. Our mother's murderous curses etc.: the Erinyes were often, perhaps originally, thought of as roused by the curses (*arai*, prayers for retribution) of parents or other victims of wrongdoing, e.g. *Iliad* 9.453f., 566–72, *Odyssey* 2.135, *Thebais* fr. 2.7f. *GEF*, A. *Sept.* 785–91. In tragedy curses are sometimes personified as Arai (A. *Sept.* 695, 954, S. *OT* 417f., *El.* 111f.), and sometimes identified with the Erinyes (who in A. *Eum.* 417 say they are called Arai in the underworld; cf. *Cho.* 400–8, *Sept.* 70, 720–6).

1325–6. embrace me etc.: a poignant contrast with their reunion embrace (596–7 n.), and with their embrace and lament for Agamemnon before the matricide in *Choephori*.

1327–30. This cry of yours is dreadful etc.: the god's compassion is not so unusual as Denniston's note suggests. Artemis is not uncompassionate at the end of *Hippolytus*, although *themis* prevents her from weeping or staying for Hippolytus's death. Still, gods can only be spectators, unthreatened by mortal sufferings (Griffin 1980, ch. 1). **[οἶκτος pity**, not L's οἴκτοι 'laments': Diggle 1981.46.]

1340–1. make Electra your wedded bride: lit. 'wed Electra's body', a dignified periphrasis (cf. 15 n.), but emphasizing that she will pass physically into Pylades' possession.

1342–6: the hounds are here etc.: lit. 'fleeing before these hounds here proceed...'. Castor, a god, can see the Erinyes, and no doubt Orestes does too, but there is no reason to suppose that the other mortals do, let alone that the Erinyes appear on stage. At the end of *Choephori* Orestes sees them while the Chorus does not. This selective visibility (1236–7 n.) does not suggest that they are unreal; that would be inappropriate here, whereas in *IT* 281–300 and *Orestes* 211–315 scepticism is noticeably encouraged. **serpent-armed and dark of skin:** cf. 1252–3 n. **their yield of dreadful pains:** not merely 'woes' but the physical agonies which the Erinyes inflict on their victims, vividly evoked in A. *Eum.* 185–90, 264–8, 305. **ὀδυνᾶν καρπὸν** may refer specifically to the venom produced by the serpents they carry. In Stesichorus S 15.ii.3–6 *PMGF* the venom on Heracles' arrow that kills Geryon is 'pains from the man-killing mottle-necked Hydra' (ὀλεσάνορος αἰολοδείρου | ὀδύναισιν Ὕδρας).

1347–8. the Sicilian sea: perhaps mentioned simply because it was much travelled and dangerous. It lies between southern Greece and Sicily, bounded by the Ionian, Libyan and Cretan seas to the north, south and east (Leimbach 1972). Zuntz rightly questioned the orthodoxy that these lines allude to the Athenian expedition against Sicily of 415–3 B.C. and so imply a date of 413 for the play (see Introduction, pp. 31–2). Leimbach argues that if the Dioscuri **make haste** for a named destination they must a specific purpose beyond the routine patrol that Zuntz envisaged. That may be so, but after 992f. and 1241f. the purpose is likely to be rescuing ships in trouble at sea rather than in battle as Leimbach suggests. An allusion to the Sicilian expedition would be problematic: would the Disocuri be expected to save Athenian ships rather than Pelop-

onnesian or Syracusan ones? See also below on 1350–6. **sea-borne vessels' prows:** lit. 'in-sea ship-prows', evoking prows cutting through the waves as in *Tro.* 122.

1349. the ethereal plain: see 990–3 n.

1350–6. we do not succour those who are defiled etc.: Castor confirms that Orestes is undefiled (cf. 1294) and offers appropriate general guidance: cf. *Hipp.* 1340f. (Artemis) 'The gods get no pleasure from the deaths of those who are pious (*eusebeis*), whereas we destroy the wicked root and branch'; S. *Phil.* 1442–4 (Heracles) 'Remember to show respect to the gods (*eusebein*) when you sack Troy. Piety is of supreme importance to Zeus and outlives the individual man'; *Ion* 1619–22 (Chorus) 'A man whose house is afflicted by misfortunes should respect (*sebonta*) the gods and have courage; for in the end good men get what they deserve, while bad ones...can never fare well'; and with an element of parody *Hel.* 1676–9 (Castor again) 'Menelaus is destined to dwell in the Isles of the Blessed; for the gods do not hate the noble (*eugeneis*)...'. **[what is holy and right: τὸ** belongs 'in common' with both abstracts: cf. 162–3 n., A. *Ag.* 926 with Fraenkel's note.] **nor share his voyage with perjured men:** sea voyages are good opportunities for divine punishment, as Athena makes clear to Poseidon in *Tro.* 77–86; cf. Antiphon 5.82, 'It often happens that men with unclean hands or some other defilement *(miasma)* destroy those who are in good *(hosios)* standing with the gods, along with their own lives, when they go on board ship'. For divine punishments affecting the innocent see Hutchinson on A. *Sept.* 599f., Collard on E. *Supp.* 226–8, and for sins provoking shipwreck Parker 1983.9 n. 39. The warning comes naturally from the protectors of shipping.

Lines 1350–6 have been thought to allude to the desecration of the Herms and profanation of the Mysteries which caused a scandal at Athens just before the Athenian fleet sailed for Sicily in 415, leading to Alcibiades' exile and the execution of many alleged oligarchic conspirators (cf. 1347–8 n.). They are readily understood without this assumption. Euripides would have been ill-advised to raise such a dangerous issue during the campaign, and just as Athens was about to dispatch a second fleet to Sicily.

1357–9. Farewell etc.: the gods take off on their ethereal path, leaving the mortals to go their separate ways. Presumably the *ekkyklêma* is now withdrawn and the doors of the stage-building closed. The Chorus is the last to depart, with music. I now think it likely that Orestes and Electra both leave by *eisodos* B, rather than by opposite *eisodoi* as I suggested in Cropp 1988.xlii. Electra and Pylades have left before Castor's final speech, so Orestes' isolation is still emphasized. Now he and the Chorus leave in opposite directions.

'Euripides several times follows the salutation *chaire* (lit. 'be glad') with a remark about the difficulty of doing so' (West on *Or.* 1083–4). Here the ease with which the Dioscuri can 'fare well' is contrasted with the difficulties of mortals. The statement that misfortune is inevitable in human life hardly needs illustrating; perhaps most famous are *Il.* 24.525–33 and Hdt. 1.32. Many

tragedies end with brief reflections by the Chorus on the uncertainties of human life. Their function as 'markers' of finality is discussed by Roberts 1987, Dunn 1996.14–25.

ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

1. ABBREVIATIONS

For standard abbreviations of classical authors and works see LSJ or *OCD*. Tragic fragments are cited from *TrGF*. Commentaries on classical texts are cited by editor's name, e.g. 'Fraenkel on A. *Ag.* 218'.

AC	*L'Antiquité Classique*
AJPh	*American Journal of Philology.*
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies.*
CPh	*Classical Philology.*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly.*
CR	*Classical Review.*
DK	Diels, H. and W. Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker.* 2 vols. Sixth edition. Berlin, 1951–2.
GEF	West, M. L., ed. and transl. *Greek Epic Fragments.* Cambridge, MA, 2003. Loeb Classical Library 497.
GP	Denniston, J. D. *The Greek Particles.* Second edition. Oxford, 1954.
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies.*
HSCPh	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.*
ICS	*Illinois Classical Studies.*
IEG	West, M. L., ed. *Iambi et Elegi Graeci.* 2 vols. Second edition. Oxford, 1989, 1992.
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies.*
KG	Kühner, R. and B. Gerth. *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache.* Teil II. 2 vols. Third edition. Hannover, 1898.
LCM	*Liverpool Classical Monthly.*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.* 9 vols., each in 2 parts. Zurich, 1981–98.
LSJ	Liddell, H. G. and R. Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Ninth edition, revised by H. Stuart Jones and R. McKenzie. Oxford, 1940.
LSJ *Rev.Supp.*	LSJ *Revised Supplement*, ed. P. G. W. Glare, A. Thompson. Oxford, 1996.
LSJ *Supp.*	LSJ *Supplement,* ed. E. A. Barber et al. Oxford, 1968.
OCD	*The Oxford Classical Dictionary.* Fourth edition. Oxford, 2012.

PCG Kassel, R. and C. Austin, eds. *Poetae Comici Graeci*. 8 vols. in 10. Berlin. 1983— .

PCPhS *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society.*

PLLS *Proceedings of the Liverpool Latin Seminar.*

PMG Page, D. L., ed. *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford, 1962.

PMGF Davies, M., ed. *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta.* Oxford, 1991.

RAC *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*. Numerous volumes. Stuttgart, 1950— .

REG *Revue des Études Grecques.*

RFIC *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica.*

RhM *Rheinisches Museum.*

SMT Goodwin, W. W. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb.* London, 1889.

TAPhA *Transactions of the American Philological Association.*

ThesCRA *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum.* 8 vols. Malibu, 2004–12.

TLG *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.* Online edition. University of California, Irvine.

TrGF Snell, B., Kannicht, R. and S. Radt, eds. *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. 5 vols. in 6. Göttingen, 1971–2004.

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GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR EURIPIDES

This Bibliography is compiled and updated by the General Editor, most recently in May 2012. It concentrates on works in English.

I. *Complete critical editions*

The standard edition is by J. Diggle in the Oxford Classical Texts (3 volumes, 1981–94). To accompany his edition Diggle published many papers on the manuscripts and on individual plays, collected in his *Studies on the Texts of Euripides* (Oxford, 1981) and *Euripidea* (Oxford, 1994).

The edition of R. Prinz and N. Wecklein (Leipzig, 1878–1902) is still useful for its *apparatus* and *appendices*. The Collection Budé edition by L. Méridier and others was completed in 2003 (8 volumes, Paris, 1923–2003); it has a French translation, introductory essays and in the very latest volumes, many notes (see also under Fragments below). The Bibliotheca Teubneriana issued all of plays singly, each with bibliography and some with brief critical notes, by different editors (Leipzig, 1964–95); some have been revised, some discontinued.

D. Kovacs has published text-critical notes, in association with his Loeb edition and translation (Section III below), in *Euripidea* (Leiden and New York, 1994), *Euripidea Altera* (1996) and *Euripidea Tertia* (2003). See also under 'Fragments' below.

History of the text: W. S. Barrett, *Euripides. Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), 45–90; G. Zuntz, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge, 1965), esp. 249–88; K. Matthiessen, *Studien zur Textüberlieferung der* Hekabe *des Euripides* (Heidelberg, 1974); D. Mastronarde and J. M. Bremer, *The Textual Tradition of Euripides' Phoinissai* (Berkeley, 1982); J. Diggle, *Praefatio* to his Oxford Classical Text, Vol. 1, v–xiv, and *The Textual Tradition of Euripides' Orestes* (Oxford, 1991); Garland (Section XII below), 39–145 (with comprehensive bibliography); P. Carrara, *Il Testo di Euripide nell' antichità* (Florence, 2009: exhaustive study of the papyri of both extant and fragmentary plays).

Ancient evidence about Euripides' life and work is gathered by R. Kannicht in *TrGF* 5.1.39–150 and (with translation) by D. Kovacs in *Euripidea* (1994), 1–141.

Fragments

Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Volumes 5.1 and 5.2 ed. R. Kannicht (Göttingen, 2004), is the standard critical edition; it contains many interpretative

notes on the text. The Collection Budé *Euripide*, VIII. 1–4 ed. F. Jouan and H. van Looy (Paris, 1998–2003) is a complete edition with extremely full general introduction, lengthy essays on individual fragmentary plays, French translation and some notes. There is now a Loeb Classical Library edition of the Fragments, ed. C. Collard and M. J. Cropp, 2 Volumes (2008), with general introductory matter, texts, translations and some notes, together with introductory essays to individual plays. All these editions all contain generous bibliographies.

Partial editions: C. Austin, *Nova Fragmenta Euripidea in Papyris Reperta* (Berlin, 1968) and J. Diggle, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta Selecta* (Oxford, 1998), 79–169, both with Latin apparatus only; in this Series, C. Collard, M. J. Cropp, K. H. Lee, J. Gibert, *Selected Fragmentary Plays* (Vol. 1, Warminster, 1995, rev. Oxford, 2009; Vol. 2, Oxford, 2004): vol. 1 has *Bellerophon*, *Cresphontes*, *Cretans*, *Erectheus*, *Melanippe Desmotis*, *Melanippe Sophe*, *Phaethon*, *Stheneboea*, *Telephus*; vol. 2 has *Alexandros* (together with *Palamedes* and *Sisyphus*), *Andromeda*, *Antiope*, *Archelaus*, *Hypsipyle*, *Oedipus*, *Philoctetes*; there are introductory essays to individual plays, translation and notes. Many individual plays have received annotated editions in English and particularly in other languages: for these, and for specialist works on fragments, see the various bibliographies mentioned above. For the papyri note Carrara above.

II. *Commentaries*

E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem* (Berlin, 1887–91): nine plays only. A more widely based edition of the ancient and medieval scholia is needed. A comprehensive online edition is being prepared by D. Mastronarde: see http://euripidesscholia.org/.

Complete commentary: F. A. Paley (London, 1857^1–1880^3): commonsensical and still useful.

Major or 'reference' commentaries on single plays: *Bacchae*, ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford, 1960^2); *Cyclops*, ed. R. Seaford (Oxford, 1984); *Helena*, ed. R. Kannicht (2 volumes, Heidelberg, 1969); *Heraclidae*, ed. J. Wilkins (Oxford, 1993); *Herakles*, ed. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (3 volumes, Berlin, 1895^2; reprinted Bad Homburg, 1959); *Heracles*, ed. G. W. Bond (Oxford, 1981); *Hippolytos*, ed. W. S. Barrett (Oxford 1964); *Iphigenie in Aulis*, ed. W. Stockert (2 volumes, Vienna, 1992); *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ed. P. Kyriakou (Berlin, 2006); *Orestes*, ed. C. W. Willink (Oxford, 1986); *Phoenissae*, ed. D. J. Mastronarde (Cambridge, 1994); *Supplices*, ed. C. Collard (2 volumes, Groningen, 1975).

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